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AGATHA
AND
OTHER POEMS

E. SEARLE

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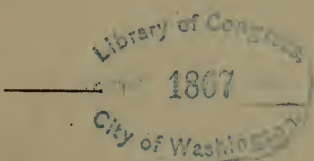
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AGATHA;

AND

OTHER POEMS,

BY

E. SEARLE.



MORRISON, ILL.:

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BY THE AUTHOR,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for Northern Illinois.

TO THE READER.

Poetry, however much it may be decried in this "Brazen Age" of literature, has been in all time past, as it is to-day, one of the most powerful agents of reform and progress, among mankind. By poetry, however, I would not be understood to mean a certain number of measured feet of accented and unaccented syllables in lines beginning with capital letters—I mean POETRY, in any form of expression. The language of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, is the language of poetry; and though its teachings have so often been tortured by stupid commentators into the most prosaic nonsense, its poetry can never die. It is this alone which has preserved from putrification, for so many ages, the dead bodies of the dogmas, rituals, and creeds to which it is inhumanly bound, by Superstition and Materialism; but a light is breaking upon us that will soon dispel the blinding mists of error.

I am sensible that in a Poem of this kind which is designed to be an allegorical picture representing certain characteristics and conditions of society, political and social, as they existed during the late war of the Rebellion, and as they still exist, to some extent, more poetic genius is requisite to give it tone, or finish than I happen to possess. It really needs powers of a Milton to paint such a picture of our "lost paradise" as to lead the public mind seriously to reflect how it may be regained; for still is seen the fiery demon, with the flaming sword barring entrance—that demon is Demagogism, and his flaming sword is political prejudice and dissension which still distract and divide the nation.

Perhaps a few hints may be useful to give an idea of the design of the story. I need not say that the character of Agatha is designed to personate true patriotism and loyalty—that of her rival, infidelity and

Secession—the first book, or “Vision,” the unsettled state of political sentiment, during the first years of the war; and if the reader finds it as incomprehensible and shadowy as a dream, it will only be what I designed to make it—a dim foreshadowing of something to come with which it has no logical connection, and in the absence of notes the reader will have to grope his way in the dark. The story properly commences with the second Book.

If I have made the heroine of the story, who is CONSTITUTIONALLY pure and loyal, a less interesting personage than JULIA, who is by birth and education disloyal, it is because there is necessarily a sort of fascination in strong and perverted passions. It is, for the reason that we have still among our politicians so many Satanic characters who would “sooner reign in hell than serve in heaven” that the secession spirit is still a personification; but let us anticipate the time not far in the future, when we shall see the state of things pictured at the close of this Poem—a union of repentant and reconstructed Secessionists with true national patriotism and loyalty. I have left one of my characters where we now find the politicians he is intended to personify—in the arms of his mistress.

I have introduced the Battle of Antietam, because it was the results of this battle by which the power of Rebellion was broken—not as a military success; for it was a victory changed into defeat—but by making Emancipation, which was always a political necessity, a military one.

In Literature, as in Fashion, there will always be those who admire flash ornaments and gaudy coloring; if I happen to please this class of readers it is for want of ability to do better. I confess to having fallen infinitely below my own ideal—so far indeed, as to feel a diffidence in submitting the book to the public, for whatever be the verdict passed upon it by my friends, I am aware that in many of its features it is sadly defective.

AGATHA:
OR A ROMANCE OF THE WAR.

CANTO I.

THE VISION.

The golden sunbeams of departing day,
Through the dim lattice shot a fading ray;
The wavy branches of the poplar trees,
Sigh to the music of the passing breeze.
The drowsy murmur of the waterfall
Breaks on the ear. The cowboy's distant call
Is heard at distance; while the ringing notes
Of the wood robin on the soft air floats,
Like anthems of sweet angel voices sighing,
Over the couch where infancy is lying.
Nature's mysterious, organ symphonies
Hum in the ear of Toil sweet lullabies;
The gorgeous landscape, ripe as young October,
Fades into twilight, tranquil, calm, and sober;

And as Night shadows, like refreshing sleep,
In silence o'er the quiet hamlet creep,
A holy calm, like nature's dreamless rest
Comes o'er the spirit.

In the flushing west,
Love's star is shining with a silvery light,
Clear as a diamond on the brow of night.
And there is one who smiles to gaze upon
Its heavenly radiance, in whose breast there shone
Love's hallowed light, reflected from a soul,
That yields enraptured to its sweet control.
Wearing his garlands on her fair, young brow,
In all the flush of hopeful beauty now.
Fair son of Venus! thy chance-winged dart!
Why was it aimed to touch so pure a heart,
As that which beat in that fair maiden's breast?—
Sweet Agatha, dream on and take thy rest,
Enjoy the happiness the present brings,
Nor think young Love may spread his truant wings,
And leave thee lonely in thy saddened home,
When sorrows and adversity shall come.
Thou that hast been fair Fortune's favorite child—
A tender flower, reared in a garden wild;
How couldst thou bear the chilling blasts, and storm,
That beats on Poverty's cold, houseless form,

Without Love's gentle smile to cheer thy heart,
And soothe the pangs of fell Misfortune's smart?
Gaze on the scene of beauty, and enjoy
The youthful hopes experience may destroy,
Till like the "baseless fabric of a dream,"
The light dissolves in shadows false and dim;
And in the anguish of thy soul thou'lt say,
"Why have I loved an idol formed of clay?"
To thee, fair dweller in youth's flowery vale,
Such prophecy were but an idle tale,
As musing now upon a scene so fair,
Thy spirit walks Elysian fields of air.

II.

Oh, there are feelings in th' harmonious tone
Of wedded souls that chime in unison,
With the ideal and the real blending,
The bliss of all that earth can give, transcending
A love so pure, and sacred, it retains
No trace, or shadow of its earthly stains;
But breathes that very atmosphere of love
Which spirits feel in realms of light above;
And such was thine, young dreamer, Agatha,
Who at the lattice, by the twilight ray,
Waited *his* coming from the distant war,
Cheered by the mild beams of the lover's star.

III.

And yet he comes not—sad and wearily,
The solemn hours of waning night went by.
More dimly burned the midnight's flickering lamp—
And still there came no sounding of the tramp
Of courser's feet—and all is calm and still,
Save the sad music of the whipporwill,
Chanting his strains of mournful melody
Upon the ear of night; nor till the sky
Flushes with morning's beam far in the east,
Have the lone vigils of the watcher ceased;
But with the faint flush of the morning beam,
She seeks her couch, to muse, and sleep, and dream.

IV.

Brightly and beautiful the morning breaks,
And from repose the lovely dreamer wakes,
To muse upon the picture Fancy wrought,
In slumbers, on the latent mines of thought.
Mysterious Power! what visions dost thou bring,
Weird, wild, and strange, beyond the picturing
Of the romancer or the poet's pen!
Yet coming often back to us again,
In after years, from the dim, shadowy Past,
Called up afresh from Memory's desert waste.
The harbingers and types of things that are

To be in future—hope—joy—and despair,
Sleep, in fresh dreams, does to the mind's eye bring,
While o'er us brooding with its downy wing.

V.

Fair Agatha! how sad the picture wrought
Upon thy soul, or imaged in the thought,
Of that expected one, who, on that night,
Came not to cheer, and give thy heart delight—
Of one who left thee with the plighted vow
But comes not, love-sent, to redeem it now.
Yet wherefore came he not—Oh, ere you blame
His long delay, or censure Wilfreid's name,
Interpret, as time will, that boding dream,
Which argues falsehood may deserve esteem,

'Twas in a Southern and a sunny clime,
Where war's grim monster, smeared with blood and
crime,
Leagued with fraternal hate, and every wo,
Which from the fount of Civil Discord flow,
Revelled with reckless, and relentless hand,
Through all the borders of that fated land:
In camp, in hospital, on battle-field,
Where grim-browed death his fiery coursers wheeled,
The "boys in blue" were falling thick and fast,

As autumn leaves before the eddying blast;
Some from their homes in that far northern land,
Whose towering hills the summer breezes fanned,
That kiss the waves of vast Ontario,
Ripling and dashing in their ceaseless flow;
And some from where broad Susquehanna winds
Its onward course, and scarce a passage finds,
Betwixt the sky-blue mountains that oppose
Its mass of waters, as it foams and flows
On to the ocean. From each clime and shore,
Stood men who in defence of country bore
The marks of many a fierce contested field,
Where Valor made rebellion's minions yield:
And some unconscious, in their suffering lay,
Fast bleeding their devoted lives away
Alone and unregarded. Agatha
Beside one stood, upon whose brow there lay
The cold death damp; but ere his eye grew dim,
She filled a cup of water to the brim
And proffered to his lips. That cooling draught,
Brought back afresh the failing powers of thought;
And then, like one reviving from a trance,
He gazed upon the fair, young countenance
So bending o'er him, and he whispered low,
"I could have prayed to Heaven, to perish so,"

But for her love, to whom my plighted vow
Was fondly given—I would not leave her now.
Oh, let me live to meet on earth again,
My gentle Julia—death could wring no pain
From his embrace, were but her presence nigh
To look upon—'twere rapture thus to die !
But who art thou?—and wherefore art thou here ?—
Nay, gentle lady, dry the useless tear :
I would not see thee weep—but tell me true !
Art thou not Julia ? No, her eyes of blue
Did never with such mild expression shine
On me, as do those quiet orbs of thine.
Say, am dreaming, or have spirits come,
To bear me heavenward, to my future home :
Visions of glory, indistinct, and dim,
Before my scarce recovered senses swim ;
Fair Julia bending o'er me, do I view ?
Nay, 'tis another, tell me, who are you !

VI.

And I am one, the dreamer sad replied,
Who should have been a noble soldier's bride,
But that he left me for a form more fair—
I gave him love—he left me to despair.
Long, long in bitterness of soul I mourned,
And pined for love that might not be returned :

But now I come, a hopeless mourner here,
To bless the dying, and to raise and cheer
The sad and sorrowing—and till grief shall end
My weary life, to be misfortune's friend.
I saw thee pale and senseless, and there came
A faint reviving of a dying flame,
From the cold ashes of a buried love :
In vain against its influence I strove ;
Swift ran the throbbing current through each vein ,
I feel the dreamy madness in my brain ;
By some unknown, mysterious influence moved,
I pitied thee, a stranger, and I loved.
The cooling draught which to thy thirst I gave,
To snatch thee from the portals of the grave,
Did to thy feeble frame fresh life impart ;
But seemed to draw its virtues from my heart.
And since thou art grown strong, my spirits fail ;
I feel an icy chilliness prevail
O'er all my languid frame—faint beats my heart,
And at its core I feel Love's winged dart.*
I am not Julia, but alas ! am one,
By cruel fate made wretched—and undone,
One question only will I ask of thee,

*Our heroine may be allowed to say in her dream what the rules of good taste would hardly tolerate in society. The reader will, of course, pardon such impropriety, unless he is of that refined class of philosophers who hold us morally responsible for our dreams.

What are her virtues whose sweet witchery
Does spell-bound in her captivating chain,
Thee, a too willing prisoner detain ?
And wert thou free—or might I break the spell?—
Lady, could woman work that miracle,
'Twere thou alone—but more, I shun to tell,
Till my weak, wandering senses are restored,
And this strong arm again may grasp the sword
To fight for freedom from that tyrant's sway,
Who rules a nation to make lords obey,
And give to slaves a freedom not their own—
So let him reap the harvest he has sown.
I fought on Shiloh's bloody, fatal field,
And with my blood, had my attachment sealed
To the just cause for which a Georgian fights—
The honor of his State, or for her rights,
But that some hireling in the tyrant's pay,
Had aimed a minnie in the desperate fray,
That sent me to the earth with ghastly wound,
And left me pale and bleeding, on the ground ;
Nor till I late awakened with a sigh,
To meet the wildering glances of thine eye
Beaming upon me, have I felt a gleam
Of reason's light break in upon my dream
Of fighting fields, and wounds, and blood and death.

Of Julia's love, and of the plighted faith
I gave her on that sad, and solemn night,
I left her presence for the fatal fight.

VII.

Soldier! thy words and bearing well proclaim
Thy nature noble—of thy rank, or name,
Further I question not, yet fain would be
All that—nay, more than—Julia is to thee:
I would redeem thee from Rebellion's curse—
Nay, frown not—have I saved thee from a worse
Than lingering death in hospital, afar
From home and kindred, or fond woman's care?
The cup of healing waters which I gave,
With love that snatched thee from a yawning grave
Demand some answering kindness in return,
From thy proud, rebel heart, however stern;
Some portion of the homage Julia shares
Might yet reward a pitying stranger's cares.
Thou might'st renounce a base, unrighteous cause,
And yield to the demands of honor's laws
For one who loves thee as a stranger—blind
To all thy guilt, and to thy weakness kind.
I ask thee not thy plighted vows to break;
Or leave the loved one for that stranger's sake,
Although she feels not, and will never know

Such love as mine, or bear such weight of woe;
Yet I entreat thee in the name of Heaven,
As for thy sins thou hopest to be forgiven,
Renounce allegiance to that rebel cause,
Which wars 'gainst conscience, and with honor's laws,
And to thy county's flag yet faithful be,
Which soon shall wave in triumph o'er the free.
There's that within my heart impels to save
Thee, from a traitor's base, dishonored grave;
It is a love more pleading, than e'er hung
Upon the accents of weak woman's tongue;
'Tis I alone—not Julia—that must be
A ministering spirit unto thee:
Refuse to heed the counsels which I bring,
The morrow sees thee a cold, senseless thing,
O'er which the vulture, hovering for his prey,
Shall shriek his funeral dirge and soar away.

VIII.

He met her searching glance without reply,
The fires of anger kindling in his eye;
Yet, quickly tempering the expression, came
Like quenching water on a smothered flame,
Love's winning glances, tender, sad and mild—
Till Passion's eloquence his thoughts beguiled.
Quick to his feverish brow his hand he raised;

And in the vision on the dreamer gazed,
Till pride, and rebel hate was forced to yield,
And leave young Love the master of the field;
And thus he spoke: Fair winning stranger, tell
Whence comes the power to plead a cause so well?
What is thy secret of that eloquence,
That so bewilders all my powers of sense,
That e'en my Julia's image fades from view,
As thus I gaze, sweet charmer, upon you;
Tell me, oh, tell me truly, what thou art,
Whose words have such strange power to change the
heart,

Woman, or angel from the upper sphere!
And what the mission that hath brought thee here:
Didst come to save, then tempt me to forget
My love, my country to repay the debt
Of gratitude, which to thy love I owe,
My sweet enchantress, and beguiling foe?
My thoughts grow strange, my giddy senses swim,
And the Past fades into a wildering dream:
For thee, should I forsake the cause I love,
And false to honor, and *my* country prove?
Rebellion's curse—you call it by that name—
To me, 'tis honor, loyalty and fame:
A prisoner, o'ercome, but unsubdued,

Sooner I'd shed the last drop of my blood,
Than by a craven, coward deed, to buy
From thee, the boon of life and liberty.
It is thy love alone has power to win,
Or lead me from temptation into sin :
With thee to seek some happy, favored clime,
I dare the guilt, if loving be a crime.

IX.

He ceased—and o'er the maiden's brow there came
A smile of triumph, and a flush of shame ;
She mused of Julia in her distant home,
Waiting and weeping for her love to come,
Through the long, silent vigils of the night,
While in the midnight lamp burned dim the light,
Flickering and feeble as the dying gleam
Of Hope—once fed from Love' unfailing stream :
But he was saved—she felt he could not die,
Beneath the love-light of her watchful eye :
No more on him a traitor's curse should rest—
That thought, at least, was solace to her breast ;
One noble soul, by love would be redeemed—
And more than lover to her now he seemed,
As leaning his arm, she passed the door
Of that barred prison—to return no more.

X.

Then came a sound of battle. On the air
Rings out the shouts of triumph and despair;
With fearful shock the fiery squadrons meet,
Advance and charge, and waver and retreat.
The booming cannon, with its deadly aim,
Like a devouring element of flame,
Mow down their ranks; and veterans in the wars,
Who fought beneath the banner of the stars,
Yield to the charge the fiery Southron made,
And look to fortune, or to Heaven for aid.
Too weak to breast it, and too proud to yield,
Their dead and dying strew the bloody field:
One brave brigade alone, unyielding met
The clashing charge of sword and bayonet;
While here and there, in wild disorder flying,
Mingling their shouts with groans of thousands dying,
Their comrades yield, by numbers overborne,
With guns disabled, and with banners torn;
While on the hill, in view, ten thousand lay,
Nor moved to save the fortunes of the day,
When all seemed lost, or all that yet remained
To hope, must be by desperate valor gained;
A single point must be maintained, or lost
Defeat and ruin is the fearful cost.
Their brave commander in the western sky,

Gazed on the sinking sun with aching eye,
And prayed that he would come, or night, to aid
His fainting soldiers, with its friendly shade.
A charge is ordered now, which must decide
Which way shall roll the battle's fiery tide—
And Agatha, with proud heart beating high
With loyal hopes, has turned her anxious eye
To his brigade, that firm, unwavering stood,
Slaughtering and toiling through a sea of blood.
Onward it moved, unyielding as a rock,
Foremost to meet the battle's fiery shock.
She felt though all beside should quit the field,
Its noble leader could not fall, nor yield;
And all her soul, inspired with martial flame,
So intermingled with his own became,
She longed to seize its starry flag, and be
Her country's "Joan," shouting victory.

XI.

The field is won—the dying, and the dead,
Thick as the withered Autumn leaves, are spread
On the cold ground. Like friends, or brothers tried,
The victors and the vanquished side by side
Lie down to sleep—no more to wake, or dream—
With cannon booming a loud requiem,
Till faint, and fainter in the distance dying,
Its echoes cease to dying groans replying.

XII.

The sun is set—her mantle twilight throws
Over the scene of agonizing woes;
And Agatha is there, again to lend
Woman's kind offices—to nurse and tend
The dying soldier—God of mercy! who,
Wounded, and dying, meets the maiden's view?
Brave Wilfreid, once the loyal and the true?
No 'twas the faithless lover—renegade,
Who had both country, and her love betrayed—
He, who had left her with love's plighted vow,
Fresh on his lips—false and dishonored now—
His life blood ebbing fast from every vein,
He lies among the ghastly heaps of slain:
With rebel uniform about him worn,
Stained with his blood, and foully soiled and torn;
Yet, at a glance, her penetrating eyes,
Saw the lost lover in this sad disguise,
And a cold horror stirred her slumbering brain,
Tearing her heart-strings with a wrench of pain;
One moment she recoiled with doubt and fear—
'Twas but a moment—then advancing near,
She whispered “Wilfreid” faintly in his ear.

XIII.

The name, and the sweet music of the tone

Recalled lost reason to her vacant throne:
Feebly, and with a moan, his eyes he raised,
And on the face, thus bending o'er him, gazed
With a calm look of anguish that would wring
Tears from the stoic eyes of suffering,
And sighing, whispered "Julia." At the name,
A sudden, agonizing faintness came
Over the listener—to the earth she bowed
Her helpless form, and moaned, and wept aloud.
And then a new, unwonted calmness came,
And breathed fresh vigor in her fainting frame:
She took his hand and raised his dying head,
And on her lap the precious burden laid
And chafed his temples; but her care was vain,
To bring back life, or consciousness again.
Death's damps were gathering on his icy brow—
His filmed eye grew fixed, and whispering low
The name of Julia, from its form of clay,
The soul of her lost Wlfreid passed away.

XIV.

The vision faded—in the dewy west,
The cloudless moon was sinking to her rest:
The stars have dimmed their brightness in sky,
And Day hung out her golden canopy,
While sable Night, the nurse of Solitude,

With all her unfledged, sickly, silent brood
Of night-mare fancies, shrinking from her beams,
Hies to the land of shadows, and of dreams ;
When Agatha awoke from sad repose,
And to th' accustomed, daily labor goes,
But stifling in her bosom, as she went,
A solemn, and a dark presentiment.

CANTO. II.

THE PRISON.

The deepening shadows of the twilight gray
Through the barred windows chase the fading ray
Of struggling sunbeams, that with sickly glare,
Had lighted scenes of hopeless misery there,
Where pale and famished, languidly reposed
A soldier's form; and as the shadows closed
More darkly round, so indistinct and dim
The picture grew, it seemed some hideous dream;
Starvation, pain, and misery were there—
Fever's delirium, and cold, blank despair.
Death reigned no more a hateful tyrant, here,
But often came a welcome messenger
To many a father, brother, husband, son,
Tortured, till wasted to a skeleton;
Within whose home, from misery's plea afar,
Shone the sweet influence of love's genial star;
Whose dear ones for the absent, long must wait,
Anxious, but vainly at the unopened gate.

Victims of malice, recklessness and wrong,
Manhood was here—the aged—and the young.
From every State where Freedom's banner waved,
Were those that for their country's honor braved
The toils, and dangers of the battle field,
Faithful to to Right, and 'gainst Oppression steeled,
Bearing with stoic firmness, all the woes,
Which rebel heads could frame, or hands impose.
Here might you see the feeble, dying boy—
Perhaps a widowed mother's hope and joy,
Refused a scanty morsel of their bread,
To keep awhile the dying from the dead.
See on a filthy pallet there reclined,
One who had wealth and luxuries refined;
Who shared the love and quiet of home,
Where wretchedness and sorrow never come.
He, to the instincts of his nature true,
Bid home, and love, and happiness adieu
To fight his country' battles—low he lies
In a foul cell—perhaps no more to rise—
And not a friendly, nursing hand to bring
A cup of cooling water from the spring,
To cool the fever on his burning brow—
Yet he is firm, or had been so, till now.
He turns his face to the cold, cheerless wall
To watch the loathsome vermin as they crawl

Along its sickening damps—then drops a tear
For woman's nursing, and for woman's cheer.
And does he dream? or hears he a loved tone
Of a sweet voice of one whom he had known
In other days, break gently on his ear?
He turns, to see a veiled form standing near,
Silent and searching. Quick through all his veins,
His thin blood rushes—then his eye he strains
To catch those features, through the twilight dim,
That stands to gaze so searchingly on him.
Hope, in his bosom, sunk, and rose again,
Till doubt became a torture and a pain.
She paused a moment—threw her veil aside,
And with a look where sympathy and pride
Seemed deeply blended, met the inquiring gaze,
So fixed on hers, by the expiring rays
Of fading daylight—then with careless eye,
She slowly passed him, as unheeded, by,
And left him, like th' illusion of a dream,
Or ray of sunlight, with its fitful gleam.

II.

Periods there are in human life, like these,
When moments grow into eternities;
As hope, and doubt, alternately control
The deep emotions of the struggling soul.

As when in slumbers happy visions gleam
We fear to wake and find it but a dream,
So Wilfreid felt, as fading from his view,
The figure passed, he bade a mute adieu;
But with a feeling he might not explain,
Which fondly argued, they would meet again.
He felt a thrill of hope—vague—undefined,
That gave a peace and quiet to his mind.
He turned to rest—his thought were far away,
Under a blue sky, with his Agatha—
And slept unconscious, till the morning beam,
Through that barred prison shot a feeble gleam.

III.

He rose, by sleep refreshed, and felt again
Renewing hope, an antidote to pain,
And while new health and vigor nerves his frame.
Love's sweet delirium o'er his spirit came.

IV.

There was a fellow prisoner who had stood
Calmly beside him, on the field of blood,
Fighting for freedom; but the fatal stains
Of Afric's blood was running in his veins;
And, for this crime—his mother's, not his own—
That he was born a Southern noble's son,
(Perchance not hers; for where Oppression reigns,

The passive subject still must wear the chains
Of gross and sensual passion, to fulfil
The lawless dictates of a master's will;
He was condemned by rebel law to die,
As a poor wretch that had aspired too high.
Long ere he went to mingle in the strife,
That law had robbed him of a child, and wife:
Torn from his fond embrace, the twain were sold,
For a small sum of that base metal—gold.
And from the hour he said to these, farewell,
To him the world was but a prison cell:
No love—no light upon his pathway shone;
He stood heart-weary—desolate—alone,
And when he fought beneath the banner free,
'Twas more for vengeance than for liberty.
Confined and fettered in a prison here,
With nothing left for hope, he scorned to fear;
Yet often would an answering sympathy,
Flash out in the dark glances of his eye,
Towards Wilfreid, when in confidential tone,
He spoke of miseries that were not his own.
And since the visit of that lady guest,
A more than wonted interest warmed the breast
Of these caged captives—a mysterious tie,
That held each heart in closer sympathy.

And with that dream, so vague, and undefined,
That raise a dying hope in Wilfreid's mind,
On that auspicious hour, when first had come
That lovely stranger to their dungeon gloom,
Ever there came a strange presentiment,
That she would be the guardian angel sent,
From fate, or death, the doomed one to redeem—
Perchance 'twas but wild fancy's idle dream :
Whate'er it was, it roused a spirit there
That gave new courage, or forbade despair.
He waited—watched the day by hope inspired,
That happy chance would give the boon desired,
Or grant, once more his longing eyes to rest
On her who woke this fancy in his breast.

V.

The first day passed—she came not—second—third,
And hope more faintly in his bosom stirred.
Short was the time that yet remained to shape
Plans for his own, and for his friend's escape :
Who with a stoic, cold indifference met
The worst—and questioned, “ Why should he regret
The doom that seemed to threaten him ; or why
Fear or a martyr, and a man, to die ?
He had no friend in all the world beside,
To mourn his fate, or question how he died ;

Another love consoled the wife exiled;
Another father claimed his only child:
He had no sister, brother, sire, to mourn
His fate, or wish, and sigh for his return;
His youthful mother, long ago, had laid
On the cold lap of earth her dying head—
Then let the oppressor do the worst he can,
He lived a martyr, and could die a man.”
With words like these, he baffled causelss hate,
And calmly smiled at destiny and fate.
This calm indifference of the friend begot
In Wilfreid's soul compassion for his lot—
A warmer feeling of that brotherhood,
Deduced not from nobility of blood.

VI.

The fourth day came, and with it brought the guest,
Whose image had so lastingly impressed
Itself on every nerve of Wilfreid's soul,
Attracted like the magnet to the pole.
In queenly beauty still she moved, but wore
A look more sad and thoughtful, than before.
A glance, like pity, in her fiery eye,
Betrayed a soul, alive to sympathy.
Upon the inmates of that dismal cell
She smiled, as words of hope and comfort fell

Like sweetest music, on the friendless ear,
Inspiring peace, and confidence, and cheer.
On Wilfreid and his friend, she ever cast
A prying glance, as often as she passed
The fettered slave—oft turned to gaze again,
As if some doubtful thought perplexed her brain.
'Tis but a moment—moving quickly on,
She passes, like a meteor, and is gone.

VII.

And then she came, attended by a page,
Infant in years, but circumspect and sage;
So lithe of form, and beautiful in face,
In him, the Afric's blood you scarce might trace :
His manly bearing, graceful, free, and bold,
A tale of noble birth and lineage told.
Seven summer suns on his dark brow had shone,
As yet few flowers had on his path been strown;
But now from the dark shadows of the past;
His steps emerged into the light at last.
A basket, filled with choicest fruits he bore,
And while his little hands dispensed its store
Of dainties, at the couch of suffering,
Prouder he looked, and happier than a king,
And his fond mistress tenderly the while,
• Surveyed her protege with approving smile.

VIII.

Wilfreid had noted with approving joy
Until a tear-drop moistened in his eye ;
And now the mistress, while she cast aside
Her former coldness, or reserve, or pride,
Towards him advancing, with sweet courtesy,
Spoke a kind word—then turned her restless eye
Full on his mute companion sitting near,
As she would speak that which he must not hear.
She beckoned Wilfreid from his presence—then
She hesitated, blushed, and spoke again :
“ Soldier, perhaps, you wonder that I feel
More than a common interest for your weal :
Since first I saw you in a prisoned cell,
I have had strange fancies that I dare not tell.
In dreams, that image so filled my mind,
That peace, or rest, I may not hope to find.
Pardon, if now my woman lips reveal
That on which prudence still should keep a seal.
I came yon prisoner’s forfeit life to save,
That wears the chains and fetters of a slave ;
Why I would free him seek, not to inquire,
He must not perish, though he dared aspire
To meet you here, a prisoner forlorn,
With pangs of sickness, and gaunt Famine worn ;

And there was that deep meaning in thine eye,
That held me captive to captivity.
In vain I strove to chide away the dream
That woke a something more than cold esteem.
A thousand times I said, begone!—farewell!
But still my heart was in a prisoner's cell.
I am but woman, weak and foolish—nay,
Turn not incredulous, your eyes away.
Were you not held a helpless prisoner here,
Midst all that tortures, save remorse and fear,
The words I speak were strangers to my tongue,
Though life itself upon my pleading hung.
More at this time my heart forbids to tell,
Sweet rest be with thee, soldier, fare thee well!

IX.

She called the boy and vanished from his sight,
And left him doubting if he saw aright,
The charmer gone, over his sinking frame,
A weakness born of desolation, came.
Fair Agatha! in thy pure, stainless breast
Hadst thou divined the thoughts that marred his rest,
Sure thou hadst felt one pang of jealousy,
(For when was woman from that weakness free?)
As now he sought his couch of straw to find
In sleep, an opiate for a restless mind.

X.

The morning dawned, calm, beautiful, and fair;
There was a bracing vigor in the air,
Which, with its kindly influence, crept through
The bars of Libby's prison, fresh and new.
Man's art may nameless modes of torture find,
To wreak his vengeance on his suffering kind,
But cannot take from heaven's pure atmosphere,
That which brings hope and vigor, health and cheer.
Though poisons may be mingled with the gale,
In damps, which from foul prison cells exhale,
Where fell Disease with all its horrors reigns—
And fevers raging in the victim's veins
Are fed, and nourished by that want that wrings
The red drops from frail life's exhausted springs:
Yet the sweet influence of the balmy air.
Is felt by the poor famished prisoner there,
Like inspiration gently to revive
Life's energies, and keep its flames alive,
This Wilfreid felt; and never since that day,
When first a prisoner in that hold he lay,
Famished and wretched, had he breathed so free,
With the dear hope of life and liberty.

XI.

Again she came—the stranger—but she wore

An anxious look, less cheerful than before.
The boy beside her, with his little hoard
Of choicest dainties in his basket stored.
Oh, how joy sparkled in his eager eye,
To cheer the heart of want and misery,
By lavishing his bounties, as he goes,
Dispensing blessings grateful e'en to foes.
His acts so winning, e'en to feeling moved
The imprisoned slave—and while a smile approved
Each generous deed, fancy a moment strayed—
Once more he seemed beneath the cedar shade,
List'ing the prattle of his infant boy;
Not Lissy more his pet, his pride, and joy.
His pale lip quivered, and he turned away,
And from his dimmed eye brushed the gathered spray.
Meanwhile the boy approaching where he stood,
Proffered his gift, as if he felt the mood
Of his sad thoughts, and tenderly would seek
Some word to cheer the stranger's heart, to speak :
The simple act of childish kindness, wrung
With more than grief, a noble nature stung
With the keen arrows of despair and wrong,
Till fond words grew as strangers to his tongue.
Something so winning in that noble child—
The act so noble, and the look so mild,

Awoke those sympathies that long had slept,
While blank despair had o'er his being crept.

XII.

And where the mistress? with her face half-veiled,
Leaning as if her woman strength had failed,
Against the damp walls of that dismal room,
Like one to speak her own or others' doom,
More dear to her than life itself—a life,
That must be ever with her love at strife.
She looked on Wilfreid with a pleading eye,
That spoke before her words, “He must not die!”
Would I might save and win thee to a cause,
Upheld by justice, truth, and honor's laws.
Believe that I would sooner wear thy chains,
In this sad place, where starving misery reigns,
Than see thee perish, though my country's foe,
Thyself would triumph in our overthrow.
You think, perhaps, it woman's craft, or whim,
And lightly of my words, or motives, deem:
Then let me prove to thee my truth and faith,
And snatch thee from the cruel jaws of death.
My sire does wealth and influence command,
And life and ransom both are in his hand,
Would you but yield to claim the proffered grace,

And a just cause, so worthy thee, embrace.
My heart is pained to read thy destiny,
When but one noble act would set thee free.
Nay, frown not, but bethink thee of the wrong,
Which we have borne so patiently and long:
Denounced as heathen by a ranting tribe,
Whose god is Freedom, worshipped for a bribe.
Of Slavery's curse what though they rant and rail,
They bow the knee to Mammon, or to Baal.
Phillips and Greeley are the lights that shine,
To prove their doctrines, and their gods divine.
Free lovers, and well schooled in skeptic lore,
Higher than Revelation they would soar,
And call down withering curses on our head—
Pull down our laws, and set up theirs instead.
They call us rebels, since we dare to fight
For law, and Constitution, and the right,
Seeking to rule us by a tyranny,
To set a poor, benighted people free,
Who in their servitude, are happier far,
Than your blind followers of their teachings are.
Look on that youthful smiling countenance,
Love and affection in each eager glance!
Think you he would be happier were he free
From such a fearful bond of slavery

As binds him to his mistress? He would grieve
In pining sadness were he forced to leave
E'en for a day, his station at my side;
And 'tis his joy, ambition, and his pride,
My slightest wish, or bidding to fulfil;
He serves in bondage, but he loves me still.
Ah me! were all mankind such willing slaves,
Fewer would pine for quiet in their graves;
Life might less joyless, and unhappy prove,
Were all so governed by the law of love.

XIII.

She ceased, and turned her fiery eyes away,
And left him to reflection still a prey.
'Twere vain to paint the tumult of his soul,
Where doubt, and hope, and love assume control,
Alternately repelling and repelled,
Till 'gainst their tyranny the man rebelled.
He felt, too deeply felt, temptation's power,
And rose to meet it in the trying hour;
Should he forsaking his country's flag, and prove
False to the right, his honor, and his love,
To purchase life, while thousands by his side,
Without a murmur of complaint, had died?
Young patriots who had never felt, till then,
A pang of misery, suddenly grew men
To suffer and endure—yet hard it seemed,

A country that they served had not redeemed
Her sons from such a fate, or in the strife,
Had else avenged their wrongs with life for life.
In northern camps, their rebel foes were fed ;
None felt neglect, or famished for their bread ;
And that cold apathy, he felt indeed,
Might just excuse, e'en for desertion plead :
Yet by such influence alone assailed
He could have met the tempter and prevailed ;
But with a foe more dangerous he must deal,
That taught him less to reason, than to feel.
He felt the danger, while he sought in vain,
To break the pleasing bondage of his chain.

XIV.

He roused himself to speak, but she was gone,
And, save his chained companion, there was none,
To whom he might unveil the thoughts that hung
Now eager for expression on his tongue ;
And while he paused, half-doubting, Marius broke
His moody silence, and thus smiling spoke :
“ A telling speech thy lovely friend has made,
Perhaps 'tis best her counsels were obeyed :
It sure must need slight argument to prove,
Twere best be governed by the law of love.
She who could so paint Slavery, might paint

A Beelzebub, and show him for a saint.
I grant she has, to show it features fair,
A most convincing sample, but a rare;
But would she paint it on a broader scale,
Doubtless her charming eloquence would fail:
And should another for a sample sit,
It would change the picture—nay, would ruin it.”

XV.

The smile sarcastic, withering and cold,
That curled his lips a tale of suffering told;
And Wilfreid's cheek grew crimson as with shame,
While deep emotion thrilled through all his frame.
He would have questioned further of the past,
But the stern look which Marius on him cast,
Forbade inquiry, and in sullen mood,
Confused, perplexed, and unresolved he stood,
Until his fellow prisoner again,
Broke in upon the reverie of his brain.

XVI.

“I care not for the doom pronounced on me,
That sooner sits th' imprisoned spirit free;
Yet would I live for vengeance—to repay
The debt I owe to those who took away,
What was more sacred, and more dear to me,
Than home, or friends, or life, or liberty.

I could have served the master as a slave,
Till toil had worn this body to the grave,
Without a murmur at the cruel doom,
But that they robbed me of an angel, whom
I loved and honored—and a darling boy—
All, all that could inspire my heart with joy;
That happy page, oh, how he calls to mind,
The loved, and lost!—so like in years, and kind,
That I can almost fancy that in him,
I see fulfilment of prophetic dream.
But doubting friend, I wonder that you stand
Halting 'twixt two opinions—if the hand
She offers you, to starving you prefer,
Leave this accursed place, and follow her—
Self-preservation is God's law, and made
To govern all things—it should be obeyed,
Although it often breaks the kindred tie,
And on Faith's fainter impress stamps a lie.
Life with new love is better than the cold,
Unsympathizing memory of the old,
With helplessness, starvation, and despair,
Like ghostly phantoms, present everywhere.
Your country, so unmindful of her fame,
Has little right this sacrifice to claim
Of those to whom protection is refused—
Their faith betrayed, and loyalty abused:

E'en you, who fought with honor in the field,
Find not in her all-powerful arm a shield;
She leaves you here, thus unavenged, to starve,
And gives her foes rewards for which we serve—
She gives her prisoners food, and needful care;
They give to us starvation and despair.

XVII.

The words on Wilfreid's tortured spirit fell
Like burning coals whose fires he could not quell.
These had a logic to affect the sense,
More potent than the specious eloquence,
Built on that nice, and subtle theory,
Sage politicians deemed it wise to try—
To conquer rebels—and protection lend,
To screen these "erring brethren," and defend.
To those who never sickened, starved, and pined
In rotten dungeons, this might seem but kind;
But they who suffer, "rights" cannot discuss—
They feel, with Æsop's frogs, 'tis death to us
That which was thought a farce the actors made
A most expensive tragedy, when played,
That loyalty that can excuse all wrong,
Must be indeed forgiving, hopeful, strong:
This Wilfreid felt—but yet had stood the test,
Had not another passion warmed his breast,

And roused such feelings as denied him rest.
He thought of Julia till her image grew
Into a fairer picture than the true.

XVIII.

And when she came not on the promised day,
His warm impatience scarcely brooked delay.
Till now, he hardly felt how slowly by
Crept the slow hours of his captivity.
He might with stoic resignation bear
The withering influence of cold, blank despair;
But when 'twas tempered with the sweet unrest,
Which Hope and Love had roused within his breast,
Fanning the flame, each day, with words and sighs,
And the fond pleadings of fair womans' eyes,
'Twas like a fire that tortured and consumed,
Yet with its light his prison walls illumed;
In vain, to chase these wicked dreams away,
He thought of her—the gentle Agatha.
Long had he pined, as in a living tomb,
Waiting and hoping, but no word had come
To cheer his sinking spirits and revive
The fires of love, and keep its flames alive;
Until, despite its strength, too sorely tried,
Despair had conquered, and faint hope had died.
But love and sympathy awoke anew,

Those pent up feelings, he could not subdue.
Freedom and love in Beauty's shielding arms,
The firm resistance of the will alarms
Till half-unconscious, to the force he yields,
Who never faltered upon battle fields,
And conquered by bewildering Beauty's charms,
He sinks a willing prisoner in her arms.
In prison hold he might have pined and starved,
Nor from his steadfast loyalty have swerved—
In gayer scenes, undazzled, he had met
The witching smiles of the arch, gay coquette,
And never, e'en in thought, or fancy, strayed
From one to whom his first fond vows were paid,
But gives himself in this ill-omened hour,
To the soul's weakness, and to woman's power.
Beauty, with love and sympathy, had gained
The mastery—and o'er the patriot reigned,
And joined with these, an earnest hope to save
From fate impending, the death-sentenced slave,
Who by some subtle influence of mind
Had closely round his sympathies entwined,
His very being, till a kindred tone
Of thought into companionship had grown.
The choice once made, he dared not pause to think;
But, like the dreamer on the dizzy brink

Of some vast precipice, startled, impelled
To take the leap—by that strange influence held,
Which urges forward, oft against the will,
Fate, Destiny, or Mission to fulfil.

XIX.

'Tis midnight—in his prison's deepest gloom
Sat Marius, musing of the morrow's doom.
Unconquered, firmly, calmly did he wait
The last award of unrelenting fate.
He seemed her chosen victim, but too brave
To be a cringing suppliant, or a slave;
Bereft of all, which makes existence dear,
He had no future hopes—no present fear.
He was alone—without one tie to bind
His crushed and sore affections to his kind.
To him a blackened ruin but remains—
No drop of blood that run in human veins
Claimed kindred with his own—a mother died
The victim of a traitor's lust, and pride.
A sire had never deigned to claim his own—
And but the memory of a wife and son
Remained to him—ah! happy if the tomb,
Had these redeemed from Slavery's fearful doom!
That kind assurance would have brought relief,
And soothed the silent anguish of his grief.

Life shorn of blessings, once so dearly prized,
If proffered now had been a gift despised,
But that a hope of vengeance still possessed
The deep, dark, wild emotions of his breast;
Not vengeance on his fellows, formed of clay—
A feast for worms—a phantom of a day;
But on that system that usurped control
Over the sacred instincts of the soul;
And under the dread sanction of a law,
Protects the brute, and holds the man in awe—
Gives him, at will, to break affection's ties,
And make of honest love a merchandize;
And he had prayed to see—if by the sword—
A nation humbled, till it should accord
To Slavery's sons, those sacred liberties,
Which traitors still might claim as guarantees.
Vain hope! for ere might set to-morrow's sun,
Life's sad, and painful journey would be run;
The fevered dream of being would be o'er,
Nor wrong, nor hatred, gall his spirit more.

XX.

No sound breaks on the stillness of repose,
Which darkness o'er the scene of suffering throws,
Save when, at intervals, the feeble moan
Of pain is heard, or fainter dying groan

Where some poor sufferer with expiring breath,
O'er Misery triumphs in the arms of death.
Some with half-disembodied spirits roam
Amid the dear, familiar scenes of home,
There far from war's dread horrors and alarms,
Breathe out their souls in love's embracing arms.
Close by the side of Marius, there lay
A soldier breathing fast his life away—
A boy in years—and as death's trance began,
To happier scenes, awakened memory ran,
And with a mother's kiss upon his cheeks,
In faint, and dying accents, thus he speaks:

Dear Mother, kiss me yet again—
Your hand upon my brow;
It soothes—the fever of my brain
Is quenched—I'm happy now.

I had not thought, dear mother, I
Should e'er again behold
Your face, to bless you ere I die—
'Mother! 'tis very cold!'

Before my eyes 'tis growing dark;
Why burn the lights so dim?
Where is my little sister? Hark!
Who sings, so sweet, that hymn

You taught me once? it is her voice!

Go, mother, bid her come,
How she will love me, and rejoice
To welcome brother home!

The lights are dim—I cannot see
That smiling, happy face.
Closer—your arms, and give to me,
One loving, fond embrace.

How very strange! It almost seems
Some fancy of the brain,
That often came to me in dreams,
That I am home again.

Oh, let me feel your hand once more
Upon my forehead prest;
'Tis sweet to think my march is o'er—
I am weary, and must rest.

'Tis long since I have lain this head,
Save on the damp, cold ground,
Or where the prison glooms have shed
Their fetid vapors round.

Oh, sweet will be my rest to-night,
Upon my downy bed
So long unpressed—To feel the light

Your smiles upon me shed.

But why so silent, mother?—Speak!

It cannot be a dream—

I feel your kiss upon my cheek,

But darker shadows seem

To come between, and now, alas!

It fades—the vision bright—

'Tis but a cloud—and soon will pass;

I go to rest—Good Night,"

But hark! I hear afar the sound

Of music in the air,

Its notes my failing senses drown—

A light—see, mother, there!

They beckon me, and I must go,

Where shouts of triumph swell—

I had not thought to leave you so—

Mother—one kiss—farewell!

XIX.

It ceased—that voice; but on the listener's ear,

Its echoes rang, in accents soft, and clear;

While by his side in death's repose there lay

A wasted form of cold, and senseless clay.

A death so happy, where kind angels drew

The curtains close, to give a spirit view
Of the long-lost sweet paradise of home;
Marius had pined for, as for rest to come:
But this, to him, unpitying fate denies—
A felon's—not a soldiers death he dies,
And to the last, relentless, cruel foes,
Must gloat their eyes on nature's dying throes.

XX.

Thus musing, falling faintly on the ear,
A echoed step he hears, or seemed to hear.
He raised his head—and lo, before his eye,
A muffled form is moving silently,
Like a wan, beckoning ghost, with cautious tread,
Among the sick, the dying, and the dead.
Approaching near, his fetters she unbound;
Then cautiously she threw her cloak around,
And bade him follow. At the friendly sound
Of that inspiring voice, he rose, and cast
A searching glance, and following closely, passed
The slumbering guard, and weary sentinel,
And left forever, that detested hell:
Once free, he raised to heaven a grateful eye;
The stars were shining in the cold, blue sky;
Afar upon the stream the curling mist,
Crept softly—and the moaning night-breeze kissed

The dusky landscape—all was bright and fair;
There was an inspiration in the air,
Which raised to heaven his thoughts and checked
despair.

A purse of gold, in parting, now she drew,
And gave him, as she waved a mute adieu.
And left him there, with life and liberty,
Though purchased at a ransom somewhat high,
To seek his safety in some friendlier clime,
Where Faith and Loyalty were not a crime,

CANTO III.

THE BATTLE.

High on a greensward knoll a mansion stood,
Shaded, and half-embowered within a wood;
Stately and old, and grand without pretense,
It wore a look of noble elegance;
And seemed upon its neighbors to look down,
With something half betwixt a smile and frown,
As Genius sometimes from her eminence
Looks down on her plain neighbor, Common Sense.
The stately trees, that rose a colonade,
Stretched wide their arms, to give more ample shade,
Beneath was twined a bower, in which both Art
And Nature, seemed to share an equal part.
Near by a garden bloomed, where Taste might cull,
To feast the eye upon the Beautiful.
Where nought was wanting that could lend a charm,
A poet's fancy, or his soul to warm.
There breathed a spirit of refinement there,
Which shed a love-enchantment on the air;

Here Wealth her richest ornaments had placed,
Culled, and adapted by the hand of Taste :
No spot more lovely could proud Richmond boast,
Nor one embellished at so lavish cost.

II.

'Twas Evening—and the Autumn sun went down,
In fiery splendor o'er the bust'ling town ;
Rumors of war—of battle to be fought,
Were from the lips of anxious talkers caught.
Near Antietam Lee's mighty army lay,
Waiting impatient, for the coming fray ;
Flushed with success, and fired with rebel rage,
Their hopes a certain victory presage,
And confidence, as if their cause was gained,
Throughout the streets of haughty Richmond reigned.

III.

Under the shadows of their moonlit bower.
They sat—the lovers—at the twilight hour,
Whispering in tones, low, musical, and clear,
Words which had been but agony to hear,
For that lone watcher whom we erst have seen,
Waiting the coming of the one—a queen
In maiden loveliness ; but wanting, still,
That firm, imperious, and unconquered will
Of her proud rival, whose magnetic art

Had won the mastery o'er a loyal heart.
Like sage Ulysses in Calypso's bower,
Detained a willing captive by her power,
Whose fascination banished from his view
Home, and the memory of a love as true
As chaste Penelope's—till Wilfreid strove
No longer 'gainst the current of his love;
But yielding to the influence of her charms,
He sunk; a willing captive in her arms.

IV.

Long sat they gazing on the self-same star,
Whose light was beaming on that home afar,
Where Agatha for his return did wait
Like stockdove pining for its absent mate.
Twas the same hour, when by her hopes beguiled,
She lingered at the lattice, wept and smiled:
Though never doubting of his truth, a shade
Would flit before her, like the shadows made
By passing clouds that veil the moon's pale light,
And steal across the sombre fields by night.

V.

And with some sad misgivings in his breast,
He spoke of love—his thoughts the maiden guessed,
And with some fond expressions from her tongue,

A half confession of his secret wrung :
Of her fair rival—gentle Agatha,
She heard him speak—and coldly turned away :
And schooled her woman nature, till by art,
She conquered the emotions of her heart ;
Whate'er the past had been, she knew full well
Memory had not the power to break the spell
Her charms had round her captive lover thrown,
Binding his very being to her own ;
First love, however strong, subdued at last,
Must fade into oblivion with the past ;
And, ere the setting of to-morrow's sun,
Would ties be formed that could not be undone,
Further she shunned of her proud heart to ask—
Their fates the future would alone unmask.

VI.

Upon their bridal day, the sun rose fair ;
Thro' the thronged streets of Richmond, everywhere,
The multitude are hurrying to and fro,
Elate with recent triumph o'er the foe.
Rumors of battle are upon the gale,
At which fond woman's cheek, grows blanched and
pale,
Thinking upon her absent ones afar,
So soon to mingle in the walks of war,

Many with listless, and a saddened eye
Survey the pageant slowly passing by.
Few were th' invited guests: but those who came,
Were counted noble—such they were in name.
In Richmond many a gallant youth had vied,
To win the love of that imperial bride;
And there was one as proud and nobly born,
Had proffered love a woman might not scorn;
Yet, from her lips a cold refusal took,
With that calm smile, a lover ill might brook—
And now he came, and mingled with the rest,
A half unwelcome, but invited guest;
And by the martial trappings which he wore,
'Tis seen it was a Colonel's rank he bore;
While on his face the imprint of a scar,
Bespoke him one not guiltless of the war.
Proud was his bearing—and his steadfast eye,
Spoke of resolve—a will to dare, or die;
And when he smiled, who closely scanned, might trace
Dark lines which thought had written on his face:
He wrapped himself, as with a screen, to hide
The strife within, 'twixt love and wounded pride;
And while the arrow rankled in his heart,
He coldly acted an indifferent part—
His careless words, like haunting echoes fell

Upon the ear, and played their part so well,
Few might discern the pent volcanic flame,
That burned within, and withered up his frame.

VII

Now scarce before the altar had been said
These solemn words, "With this, I thee do wed,"
When casting on the bride a withering look
Of mingled jealousy and stern rebuke,
He drew his hand across his threat'ning blade,
And murmuring audibly—"THE RENEGADE!"
Passed slowly down the aisle, and at the door,
Vanished, like phantom, to be seen no more.

VIII.

'Twere vain to paint the gloomy thoughts that burned
In that proud soul that once his love had spurned ;
A moment, half-unconscious, she surveyed
The scene before her into darkness fade :
Forgetful of her triumph as a bride,
She saw him not—the lover at her side ;
But in his stead, a spectre, gaunt, and grim,
Before her stood—the threat'ning ghost of him,
Who for her love, had broke through honor's laws,
False to his pledges, and his country's cause.
That spectre bridegroom, with its bony arms,
Extended wide, stood gazing on her charms ;

Deep in their sockets sunk, its fierce eyes roll—
A skeleton of Love, without the soul—
The slimy reptile, and devouring worm,
Feasted, and crawled o'er all its hideous form ;
In vain she sought its foul embrace to shun,
As lovingly it whispered, "We are one !"
But the words, she felt the shock, that broke
That fearful spell, and in HIS arms awoke,
Fainting, and sick at heart ; but with a smile,
That all their sad inquiries would beguile :
And left the altar with a look so changed,
As one, alike from love, and hope estranged.
While oft the vision rose before her sight ;
Changing Love's noonday into darkest night.

IX.

We leave them now—young Wilfreid and his bride—
With all that friends and wealth can give, supplied,
To revel in all the pleasures these bestow,
Far from the scenes of wretchedness and wo,
That in the famished prisoners' cheerless gloom,
Prepared the wretched victim for the tomb.
The soft winds, sighing through the light parterre,
Brought sounds of sweetest music to the ear ;
The luxuries that crowned their ample board,
Were such as few in Richmond might afford ;

They had their slaves, obsequious to perform
Their slightest bidding; and whate'er could warm
A lover's fancy, was at his command,
Who stood among the magnates of the land.

X.

But where was he—the friend he loved so well,
When yet a prisoner in his lonely cell?
He, who from chains and thralldom had been freed,
And saved from vengeance, by a doubtful deed.
Guided by the dim light of Freedom's star,
By night, he travelled through the wilds afar,
Seeking a refuge from an outlaw's fate,
And still pursued with unrelenting hate.
His flight in doubt, and darkness, he pursued,
Concealed by day, in deepest solitude;
Until, by hope inspired, the outlawed man,
To taste the sweets of liberty, began;
Though weary, famished, friendless, and forlorn,
He held the miseries, which he braved in scorn;
So much the boon of freedom cheered his soul,
Attracting like the magnet to the pole.
He scarce remembered what the past had been,
As Hope relumined his dark soul again.

XI.

And now his perils, and his wanderings o'er,

His thoughts turn backward to the past once more.
Keen were the wrongs that rankled in his breast,
Musing on other hopes he once possessed ;
The memory of a long-lost child and wife,
Clouded this dawning twilight of a life.
While yet a vague presentiment, at times,
Spoke of re-union in congenial climes,
This fanned the flame of Hope, whose smoldering fire
Could but with his expiring breath, expire.
Exiled, and outlawed, in a stranger's land,
To baffle fate his daring soul he manned.
And soon beneath the starry flag that waved
Above the free, war's perils he had braved ;
And at South Mountain's desperate fight he won
A Major's rank, by deeds of valor done,
When gallant Reno, in that fearful strife,
Redeemed the day at forfeit of his life.
There when the setting sun's expiring ray,
Threw its glint splendors o'er the hillside gray,
First in pursuit, he drew th' avenging sword,
And, like a torrent, on the vanquished poured ;
And by his deeds of reckless daring, gave
The foe to feel how valiant is a slave,
When, freed by fortune from the tyrant's sway,
He fights to teach the tyrant to obey

Those laws on which he tramples, as in scorn,
To be the curse of millions yet unborn.
Nor unrewarded was the stranger's worth,
Felt was his valor, though unknown his birth;
The time had come, when, trembling for its fate,
Cooped in their capital, the ignobly great,
Who ruled in counsel, but who shunned the fight,
Were willing to accord to those the right,
That craved the boon—to meet the foe in arms,
Whose valor filled their faint hearts with alarms.
Nay, they would even condescend to praise,
Or from the ranks “an unknown” private raise;
And so brave Marius—valor's just reward,
A Major's rank, as fit promotion shared.

XII.

The harvest moon is shining calmly bright,
Tipping the mountain tops with silvery light,
And, front to front, the hostile armies lay,
After a slight encounter of the day.
All was so tranquil, that along each line,
Where dimly faint the distant watchfires shine,
Rose scarce an echo on the evening air,
To tell of a victorious army there,
Waiting but for the dawning of the day,
Again to mingle in that doubtful fray,

On whose stupendous issues hung the fate
Of a proud nation's capital. Elate
With recent triumph, Lee surveyed his host,
With haughty triumph of a conqueror's boast;
While Hooker with firm confidence inspired,
His gallant troops with noble ardor fired.

XIII.

Far on the left where Burnside's corps is seen,
The Antietam's slow waters roll between
The opposing forces. Near a bridge of stone
Across the passage of the stream was thrown.
Brave Marius here, among the loyal brave,
Was seeking rest, along the placid wave.
He could not sleep—strange fancies in his brain
Awoke—and memories that gave him pain.
He gazed upon the moon, and with a sigh,
Beheld her mounting up the southern sky,
The scenes reminded him of other days,
When he had stood, a wondering boy, to gaze
Upon the beauties of the silent night,
In all the ecstacy of youth's delight.
What though a slave, existence then had zest,
Which freedom now, awoke not in his breast:
What was the present but a changing dream,
Without that love the future to redeem

From those dark memories, which the mournful Past
Had o'er the blight of crushed affections cast ?
Till soon from visions of disturbed repose,
To seek relief from torturing thoughts he rose,
And listless though the moonlight meadows strayed,
Until, by chance, his wandering eyes surveyed
A fire that dimly burned upon the height,
Where all is silence, solitude, and night ;
Not distant far, from where encamped, his band,
Were sleeping, by the welcome night-breeze fanned.

XIV.

Thither half-doubtingly, he bent his way,
Far up the summit of the hillside gray,
And as the spot, with cautious step he neared,
Sudden a figure, muffled close, appeared ;
And flitting by him like a silent ghost,
Was soon amid the deeper shadows lost ;
But following close, with cautious step and slow,
As one resolved, yet wary of a foe,
He saw by the pale moon's uncertain light,
The silent, ghostly wanderer of the night,
Glide through the copswood wild and disappear,
Like frightened antelope or timid deer,
Vain was his search the fugitive to trace—
It vanished like a spectre from the place.

And was it fancy, that he seem to hear
A name familiar echoed on his ear,
By a lost voice the strangeness of whose tone,
Had into sweet, unearthly music grown?

XV.

Awhile he stood to muse—then turned him back,
To seek his tent. Along his lonely track,
The solemn night bird flaps his boding wings,
And shrill and loud his midnight pæan sings;
Strange, hollow sounds break faintly on his ear,
And thrill that soul, unknown to mortal fear.
Little he recked of danger—with delight,
He thought upon the morrow's promised fight;
But there was that in what he heard, and saw,
That filled his soul with superstitions awe—
He felt an influence round him everywhere,
As if a spirit presence had been there.
His thoughts from dim surroundings took their shape,
And from vague fancies he could not escape,
Ever before him on the startled air,
Arose a phantom form, so sad, and fair,
He almost fancied in his moody brain,
He might embrace the wife he loved, again;
While thoughts akin to happiness, possessed,
And calmed the vague, wild terrors of his breast,

Until upon his couch of earth reposed,
Refreshing sleep his weary eyelids closed.

XVI.

A night before the battle—quiet lay
Two mighty armies, that with dawn of day
Must meet in conflict. Who shall paint the scene
So lovely now—so quiet—so serene,
Which on the morrow will be imaged there.
—The shout of triumph bursting on the air,
Mingled with shrieks and howlings of despair—
The booming cannon, that with earthquake tread,
Hurls to the earth, in heaps, its ghastly dead,
With Minnie bullets, flying thick as hail,
As rank to rank, the furious hosts assail,
And dying groans of thousands drenched in gore,
Sounding above the thundering conflict's roar,
With clash of sword and bayonet, that swell
The tide of battle—all combine to tell
A tale of human wo, and crime so deep,
Recording angles veil their eyes and weep.

XVII.

Morn dawns. The sun uprising from his bed,
Streaks the far hill-tops with his beacons red;
But dull, and heavy in the western sky,
A thunder cloud hangs dark and gloomily;

When suddenly the cannon's opening roar,
Reverberates along Potomac's shore ;
And to the right where fearless Hooker fights,
A charge is made to gain the crowning heights.
There Lee's main force, in battle's dread array,
A fierce, unbroken, solid phalanx lay.
The tide of conflict turns upon the foe ;
Who, first, retire with steady pace and slow,
Till at our brave commander's signal sign,
The cry of " Charge !" rang fierce along the line ;
Then through retreating ranks our gallants broke,
Dread, and resistless as the thunder stroke.
Borne backward on the field, they fly dismayed,
Until is gained the woodland's friendly shade :
Then from fresh columns of advancing foes,
The cry of conflict and of conquest rose,
And all the dense mass of that wood became
One fearful and devouring sheet of flame,
Bursting upon the victor's serried ranks,
That shrink, like streams retiring from their banks,
Before the fresh assailing element—
Backward they reel, with columns torn and rent,
And slow retiring from the jaws of death,
Sway like strong oaks before the whirlwind's breath.
Like wave on wave, they surge against that host,
Until the battle seems already lost.

One brave brigade opposed to check their wrath,
Went down like ocean foam before their path.
Then Hooker, as a hope forlorn, to save,
Called loudly for the bravest of the brave :
It came—and reckless of the shot and shell,
Rushed forward in the gaping jaws of hell,
And forming on the hill's opposing crest,
It stood before the victors, breast to breast.
Then rose thick volumes of sulphurous flame,
Till all was lost betwixt them and their aim.
Long unsupported in that charge they stood,
Till half their band lay weltering in blood—
Its general wounded, and with none to guide,
It wildly surged amid the battle's tide—
Broke through opposing ranks, and stood alone,
Upon the field where thousands lay o'erthrown.

XVIII.

Then raged the battle fierce along the lines,
While all his energy the foe combines
To flank our columns, where brave Rickert's band,
Opposed their fierce battallions hand to hand.
Here gray-haired Mansfield in the strife went down,
Wearing in death a victor's laurelled crown ;
His charge turned back the slaughter of the foe,
And gave his triumph the recoiling blow :

Thus doubtful on the field, the battle raged,
As host to host, or man to man engaged.

XIIY.

Now to the left, the battle's fiery tide.
Rolls like a storm of thunder, deep, and wide :
Here Burnside with tenacious courage held
The point assailed—repelling and repelled.
“The bridge, the bridge!” they shout, and fight to
gain ;
But desperate foeman still that ground maintain,
As if its strong possession was the key
That must unlock the gates of victory.
Dashing him back, unyielding as a rock,
They meet unbent the fury of the shock,
Or turn the battle on our soldiers brave,
Who fight for victory, but to find a grave.
For five long hours, along that sullen stream,
Shell hiss in air—on earth bright bayonets gleam,
And, thick as hail, along the rugged dell,
In leaden showers, the whirring minnies fell ;
But vain all efforts, till with bayonet,
York's volunteers th' opposing forces met,
And with loud shouts of triumph, backward bore
Their ranks, retreating to the farther shore :
Then rose the shout of victory on the air,

Mingled with shrieks of madness and despair—
Much had been done, to do yet more remained;
Those heights must be by desperate valor gained.
Once more command is given, and obeyed,
And charge of bayonet and sabre, made.
On all sides now the routed Southrons yield,
And fly in wild confusion o'er the field;
But all too late the partial victory came,
To win the triumph in the desperate game;
For at this moment, with loud beat of drum,
Fresh to the fight assailing forces come;
And 'gainst victorious Burnside turns the tide
Of conquest, shifting to the rebel side.
In vain he fights yet bravely, to oppose
This fiery charge of fierce, assailing foes;
His thinning ranks, now shattered, crushed, and worn
Are by the weight of numbers, backward borne;
He sees the danger—sad, but undismayed—
And to his general sends for needful aid:
Alas! none came, though scarce a mile away,
Full twenty thousand in the valley lay,
Forced from the rising to the setting sun,
The toil and glory of the fight to shun—
The crisis comes—yet to inaction chained,
Guiltless of blood Fitz Porter's corps remained.

A monument of folly, or of crime,
History shall tell to all succeeding time,
That gallant Burnside then did vainly crave
One regiment his shattered force to save ;
The only answer which his message found—
“ Go tell your General he MUST hold his ground ;
But if he CANNOT, then, at any cost
The bridge, for with that lost all else is lost.

XX.

Thus left unaided in extremity,
Along the lines he cast his anxious eye,
Reeling and broken by the battle's weight :
It was a moment big with chance and fate.
For Washington, not Richmond is the prize,
For which they fight—he conquers, or he dies.
There was a crisis when, a moment might
Decide the doubtful fortune of that fight :
All seemed concentrated in a space so small,
That if he failed, the nation shared the fall ;
Or, if success its cause so secred, crowned,
'Twas by maintaining of that rood of ground.
Just at the point, where Burnside shrunk dismayed,
Rushed to the rescue, one untamed brigade,
Hurling itself with unresisting weight,
Full in the jaws of victory, and fate.

Swords clash on steel, and gleaming bayonet,
With parried thrust is by fierce valor met,
On, on! they shout above the battle's roar,
Where grape and minnie rain an iron shower.
The gallant leader with a fearful wound,
Is from his war steed dashed upon the ground,
A second falls; then Marius to sustain
The charge, impels his horse with spur and rein,
Full on the foe, impetuous and proud,
Like tempest, leaping from the thunder cloud,
And shouting, charges forward. At the blow,
Backward are borne the crushed, recoiling foe;
The bridge is cleared—retreating fast and far,
They rush confused, late victors in the war,
Nor longer hope to breast the battle's tide,
Raised by the fiery valor of that guide,
Whose chavalric deeds, unheralded by fame,
A country's lasting gratitude must claim.

XXI.

It is the night; and by Potomac's shore,
Ceased is the thunder of the battle's roar;
Clouds of sulphurous smoke which upward driven,
Had darkened, all the day, the light of heaven,
Are mingled with white vapors, curling now,
Along the distant mountain's airy brow;

The full-orbed moon in cloudless majesty,
Has lighted up her watchtower in the sky,
And from heaven's azure vault, the stars of night,
Look down on the sad relics of the fight—
What saw they there? Let angel Pity veil
The sight, and Mercy blush to tell the tale:
At such a scene, the hero's laurels fade,
And Glory's noonday darkens into shade.

XXII.

One picture—painted not with Fancy's brush—
We give to view. Poor Human Nature, blush!
Gazing upon the scenes thou dost create,
When giving license to fraternal hate,
To drench earth's virgin breast with kindred gore,
And make them murderers, who were friends before.
Close by the bridge, where the last charge was made
By Marius, cheering on that fierce brigade,
Amid the wounded, dying, and the dead,
On the bare bosom of the damp ground spread,
A rebel warrior, pale and bleeding, lay,
As one just passing from the scene away.
A ghastly wound was planted in his side,
From which now slowly oozed life's crimson tide:
As one, unconscious of a threatening fate,
He raved in wild delirium of hate;

Convulsively he grasped his keen blade, still,
And in his agony, yet raved to kill.
What were the fearful fancies that possessed
His brain, could but by raving words be guessed;
Now seemed he priest, and in his ire and pride,
He muttered curse on bridegroom and on bride;
And then, anon, would clutch his vengeful blade,
And hoarsely shout "curse on the renegade!"
Then sink exhausted to the earth again,
With feeble murmur of convulsive pain.

XXIII!

Beside him Marius stood, and pityingly,
Gazed on that helpless form with scanning eye.
He seemed in the dark outlines of that face,
Something familiar in the past to trace—
Something at which instinctively there ran,
Through every nerve and fibre of the man,
A sickening shudder—while upon his soul,
Emotions both of hate, and pity stole.
The power that waked such feelings in his breast,
He could not know, and yet he vaguely guessed:
He saw before him there—ah! could it be?
The boy—the playmate of his infancy,
And master's heir; one that was wont to roam
Beside him, in his far-off Georgian home—

Such memory pictured him, and such in sooth
Was he, but ah, how changed from that gay youth,
Whose soul for kind companionship would crave,
To share the love, not homage of a slave.
True to its noble promptings, then his heart,
Scorned those distinctions power and wealth impart.
Ah, had he ne'er been taught in Custom's school
The sweets of power—the tyranny of rule,
Happier for both—the Master and the Slave,
Had not found shipwreck on Misfortune's wave.

XXIV.

Sadly he gazed upon the wounded man,
As o'er the past awakened memory ran :
He saw the boy into the tyrant changed,
His heart grown hardened, and his love estranged,
Reckless and wild among his young compeers,
Daring, and ripened e'en beyond his years :
Till ere the down of manhood clothed his chin,
He callous grew in recklessness and sin.
In dissipation, free and unrestrained,
A doting father's fortune fast he drained
Down to the dregs of bankruptcy, till all
Seemed lost and ruined in the spendthrift's fall :
Too late to shun the ills indulgence wrought,
Against the ruin which his follies brought.

The father proudly strove, until with pain,
He sees all further efforts must be vain—
Then Marius sees, for one poor purse of gold,
A wife and child, to hopeless bondage sold;
Condemned afar in Texan lands to roam,
Without a solace, or a hope of home.
How bitterly he cursed the ill-omened day,
That tore these treasures from his heart away.
But vain are curses, else that curse of Job,
Had spread a pall of darkness o'er the globe.
Until we feel the strivings of despair,
We know not what it is to live and bear:
Life from that hour, to him a blank became,
Who now stood victor on the field of fame,
Gazing upon the foe that once had swayed
The rod, while he had trembled and obeyed.

XXV.

He raised the bleeding warrior from the ground,
And bandaged with his scarf his torturing wound,
And bore him gently with a brother's care,
From heaps of slaughtered comrades round him there,
Bathed with cool water, his hot, fevered brain,
And nursed him into consciousness again;
And, in his tent through the long hours of night,
Watched o'er him with a brother's fond delight—

Forgot were all his wrongs, for in that hour,
He felt forgiveness, and its soothing power,
Brought hope and solace to his wounded heart,
And cured his hidden grief of half its smart.

CANTO IV.

RECONSTRUCTION.

Go with me to the Hospital, afar
From scenes of battle-fields, and hate, and war,
And view the shattered relics of the strife,
Combating with faint energies for life:
It needs no poet pen to paint the scene;
You well can fancy what it might have been.
There is no lack of woman's soothing care—
Want and Starvation do not enter there;
But all that skill, or science can command,
Around the bed of pain and suffering stand.
Whom see we here?—the gentle Agatha;
And what her sacred mission, need we say?
From the sweet quiet of her northern home,
A ministering angel she is come,
To shed the light of hope and sympathy,
From the kind influence of her quiet eye;
Though changed since last we saw her hopeful face,
She wears that easy dignity and grace,

Which virtue, though pressed down by grief and care
As an entailed possession still must wear.
Her virtuous deeds, unheralded by fame,
Are those make woman worthy of the name.
No masculine endowments hers to boast,
Where all the sex is in the heroine lost—
Not one to lead an army to the fight,
Or vindicate her injured sex's right
In lecture rooms, or in forensic halls,
Where she is gifted most, who loudest bawls—
Not such her mission; she is sent to prove
Woman's devotion, and her wealth of love.
And therefore meekly came she here, to be
A medium of Trust and Charity—
To give the suffering, friendless one to share
An absent mother's, or a sister's care.
Pale watcher! to the couch of suffering,
What consolations was it thine to bring!
How did the wounded, or despairing press
Thy angel hand, and dying smile to bless!
Those grateful smiles, to thee a wealth more prized,
Than e'er ambition's promise realized.
Let such as weep o'er some imagined tale
Of wo—and scorn a Florence Nightingale,
Or if they scorn not, never imitate,

Learn 'tis such deeds make woman truly great :
A Rachel's genius though we all admire,
Or hers who set the Armada on fire ;
Yet what true woman would aspire to be
That Queen of England, or of Tragedy,
And tread Life's stage, a cold, and loveless thing,
For all ambition or that fame can bring ?
Who would not, were its raptures understood,
Enjoy the luxury of doing good,
Rather than shine the heroine of a tale,
At whose record a shuddering world turns pale ?
Who would not sooner with our heroine share
The toils that lift the burden of despair,
Than reign a queen, whose jealousy, or hate,
Could speak the words that seals a sister's fate ?

II.

Toiling, by Love and Charity inspired,
And Faith, and Hope, that brought the rest required,
Agatha passed with footstep free and light,
Through all the lonely watches of the night,
From couch to couch, where pale and ghastly lay
The patient sufferer, pining for a ray
Of the soul's sunlight—the sweet sympathy,
Shed from fond woman's love-illuminated eye.
Her smiles were cordial for the fainting heart

And wrought beyond the poor physician's art,
Anxious she watched each wounded, dying man,
Thinking of one—and ever memory ran
Back to the past—that vision of a night,
When she beheld her Wilfreid's soul take flight.
Before her oft his dying form appeared,
Till Fancy conjured up what most she feared;
For since that night no tidings came, of him,
And in her heart the light of Hope burned dim;
She could not deem him false; yet wherefore came
No pledge, or word, or note that bore his name?
She had a boding, vague presentiment,
All was not well—and while her thoughts intent
On duty seemed, her Wilfreid's form would rise,
Pale, bleeding, dying, still before her eyes.

III.

And now it chanced the wounded Rebel met
Her view—the expression she could not forget,
He fixed upon her with his searching eye,
When first she passed him, not unheeded, by.
That fiery nature was at last subdued
Into a quiet, and a thoughtful mood:
It seemed an infant weakness now possessed,
And gave his stern and haughty nature rest.
That wildness, and delirium were gone,

And Reason sat triumphant on her throne :

His melancholy, half-imploring glance,

And something in his manly countenance,

Impressed the maiden with a vague desire,

More of his birth, and fortunes, to inquire.

She could but deem him noble, with a mind

By Education, polished and refined.

Whate'er his follies, or his crimes had been,

He ranked above the common herd of men

In her mind's eye. The prodigal who served

In foreign lands, and fed on husks, and starved,

Repentant to his father's house might come,

And share the love and welcome of a home.

His torturing wound, and weakness which it brought,

Strange transformation in his soul had wrought ;

Till in his infant helplessness he pined

For sympathy with some congenial mind,

On which he might in confidence repose,

And there unfold the history of his woes.

And from that hour, since thus the strangers met,

A mutual interest did their fates beget—

He saw in Agatha, so pure—refined,

His soul's ideal of fair womankind ;

In him, she saw an erring son of earth,

Noble alike by nature and by birth,

But swayed by passion, prejudice, or pride,
Like wandering comet from its path aside.

XII.

From duty first, acquaintanceship began :
She kindly watched, and nursed the wounded man ;
And, thankful for her kindness, day by day,
He sought his thanks in courteous speech to say,
But compliments would falter on his tongue,
While still enraptured on her charms he hung.
He felt on her, all rhetoric were lost—
Mere flowers of speech would not repay the cost
Of culling—so at last in self-defense,
He was compelled to talk plain common sense,
While she his thanks received with grateful smile,
As if they well would recompense her toil ;
And frankly, in kind words, she oft expressed,
She felt for him no common interest ;
And sometimes questioned : “ Was it force or will,
Impelled him blood of loyal friends to spill.”
And then a shadow o’er his brow would steal,
And the dark passions of his soul reveal.

XIII.

Now since in strife th’ opposing armies met,
The Autumn sun has four times rose and set.
And Lee, with Potomac’s wide wave between,

Collecting all his shattered force, is seen
Recuperating, while our General lay
Frittering the fruits of victory away.
Then—nor till then—our President awoke,
And at Rebellion aimed the fatal stroke.
He, breaking the mad Politician spell,
Rung the first change of Slavery's funeral knell.
On wings of wind, the Proclamation borne,
Gave the glad promise of that dawning morn,
When Babylon—mysterious and great,
Must be cast downward from her proud estate—
Mother of harlots, that had given birth
To deeds, that made Megiddon of the earth:
Drunken with blood of martyrs, lo! she stands—
Rebellion's standard waving in her hands—
And reads the words, prophetic of her fate,
In all the impotence of raving hate.
Perdition is the prophesy revealed;
For this, the curse of nations now is sealed.

XIV.

When Marius now—for so it chanced—came near,
And read the joyful tidings in the ear
Of him, whom as a relic of the strife,
He had from Fate redeemed, and given to life;
He turned away contemptuously, to hide

The emotions in his soul of scorn and pride.
In his stern heart, unconquered passion spoke,
And all the rebel in his soul awoke :
'Twas but a moment ; for Agatha came,
Whose angel presence could the Lion tame ;
She saw the evil passions, unsuppressed,
For mastery striving, in the rebel breast,
And with a woman's tact at once began
To test the strength, and weakness of the man.
To him an argument of right and wrong,
Had been as idle as a mockbird's song ;
This well she knew, and therefore set her art
To gain the guarded fortress of his heart :
She felt that only sympathy could win
The proud and erring from the toils of sin,
Whose natures, warped to error, yet retain,
Enough of good to break her tyrant chain,
But vain all kindness, love, or sympathy
Bestowed on Hate, and Crime, and Treachery.

XV.

She chose the nobler passions for a theme,
And spoke of Fame, and young Ambition's dream,
Till softened by her words kind memory ran
O'er all the past. The history of the man,
Imaged upon the mirror of his mind :

Wrought in his softened heart the effect designed,
Until, at times, a tear-drop from his eye
Welled up from the deep fount of sympathy;
That woman weakness had in others wrung
Sarcasm, or derision from his tongue;
But with the influence that now swayed his soul,
His thoughts, and feelings were beyond control,
And, half unconsciously they drew at last
From his stern lips, a history of the past:
Mute, Marius listened as the tale began,
That told the changing fortunes of the man.

ROOKWOOD'S HISTORY.

I was a Georgian planter's only heir,
Whom humbler neighbors called "The Millionaire,"
And early taught in Custom's lawless school
To taste the sweets of tyranny and rule.
Among my father's servants there was one
Born of a slave, and yet a noble's son.
Friend and a classmate of his college days,
My sire was ever lavish in his praise
Of Bernard Bertrand, who would often come
To spend a fortnight with his friend at home,
And when together they were called to dine,
And grew communicative o'er their wine,

They sometimes trespassed on a theme so far,
As raised a sort of matrimonial war.
My mother was a dame of high degree :
None knew their right, or claimed it more than she,
And yet 'twas thought with all her power to move,
She sometimes had a rival in her love ;
But Bertrand, whom with watchful eye she scanned,
So artfully his his peccadillos planned,
She scarce could deem him guilty of a wrong,
Until the proofs grew palpable and strong.
She had a servant—a dark-eyed quadroon,
Fair, and as virtuous as the chaste, cold moon ;
Such by her partial mistress was she deemed,
And as the model of her kind esteemed :
Perhaps, had Dian been so sorely tried,
Her chastity had not the test defied.
For Bertrand, by her guarded beauty fired,
Had set his heart to gain the cause desired ;
Each art he tried, and when all else had failed,
With proffered love her virtue he assailed ;
He praised her beauty, nay, he pledged to save—
And to redeem from bondage his fair slave.
Weak, trusting woman ! simple as a child,
Assailed by flattery, and by hope beguiled,
The charmer's voice, too oft she paused to hear,

Until its music won her ravished ear.
Though born a slave, she was no clod of earth—
She, too, could boast nobility of birth;
And though she wore dread slavery's galling chains,
As noble blood was running in her veins
As Bertrand's self could claim—its workings gave
Proud aspirations to the dark-eyed slave,
Till duped by flattery, in an evil hour
She gave herself into the traitor's power,
And fruit of his vile passion, and her shame,
A slave was born, and bore the father's name.

XVI.

This was the tale I learned. The mother pined,
And died of grief—that canker of the mind.
Young Bertrand lived, and though he ever bore
My mother's hate, he seemed to thrive the more.
Proud in her nature—in her passions strong,
She scorned the offspring for the parent's wrong,
And when together, in our infant years,
We mingled in our childish sports, her fears
Grew sharp and jealous, lest her pet and joy,
Should be eclipsed, in worth, by Bertrand's boy,
And schooled too soon, my youthful mind to scorn
Desert or worth, of menial parent born;
But still I loved him; for he had the art

To rouse the nobler yearnings of my heart,
Frank, generous, and forgiving, he would bear
My wrongs and insults with a pleading air,
Which shamed me to repentance, till my tongue
Was feign to beg forgiveness for a wrong.
My sire would sometimes give the lad to share
A smile, and kindness of paternal care.
And thus beneath one roof, our early days,
Were passed in childish sport and childish ways,
Until our hearts were bound with ties, that twined
Like clasping tendrils round each youthful mind,
We loved as younger brothers, till we grew
To share each others griefs, and pleasures, too.

XVII.

But time wrought changes, and as years began,
Too soon, to ripen Boyhood into man
I grew aspiring, and in luxury nursed,
I felt its baleful influence and was cursed.
My mother, proud, imperious, and vain,
Taught me to feel for humble worth disdain,
And in my plastic mind instilled desire,
Like Satan, o'er my fellows to aspire.
Thus trained and schooled, I felt ambition's ban,
And grew a tyrant ere I grew a man,
And Bertrand now was oft condemned to feel

The footmarks of Oppression's iron heel,
I could not hate him, but it gave me joy
To gall the noble spirit of the boy.
Too sensitive, as noble natures are,
With temper, all my bitter taunts to bear,
He oft rebelled against my tyranny,
And pined from hopeless bondage to be free.
Thus schooled by practice, by example taught,
This early training in my nature wrought
Changes, that laid foundation for a life
Of dissipation, recklessness, and strife.
I mingled freely in those tender years,
In scenes where Vice in painted garb appears,
And praised and flattered by the young heir's friends,
Whose friendships aimed at base, or selfish ends,
I paid them back in genuine gold for dross,
Without a reckoning or of gain, or loss.
All arts were used my confidence to win,
And lead me from temptation into sin;
They painted female virtues all as frail;
Like railroad stocks, in market kept for sale,
And skepticism from experience gained,
Soon gave me license, bold, and unrestrained.
I was by woman fawned upon and praised,
And as the flattery took, the stock was raised.

What countless sums of gold were thrown away,
To shine a hero in some wanton's play,
Till palled with love, I bade the scene farewell,
And took my station in some gambling hell.
It boots not now, my mad career to trace
Downward through all the by-paths of the race,
The same the journey—and its end the same—
Thousands have trod to wretchedness, and shame :
Too late my fond, and doting parents saw
The cursed effects of violated law,
Bankrupt in fortune by an only son,
Ere manhood's dawning promise was begun.
In vain they struggle to repair the waste :
I scatter all, like chaff before the blast ;
In vain my reckless follies they upbraid :
In vain they plead, or threaten, or persuade,
Deaf to entreaties, and to counsels given,
Before opposing currents I am driven,
Till shipwrecked, hopeless on the treacherous wave,
I sink—against all efforts bent to save.
My father, in the anguish of despair,
At last refused me all paternal care,
And from his ruined fortune, to secure
A mite, against me closed and barred his door.
Bertrand, a husband, and a father now,

Shared in the ruin. In his marriage vow,
Prosperous and happy, he had still remained,
Although a slave, to bitter bondage chained,
But for my crimes, and recklessness that wrought
Ruin to those who shared not in the fault,
At stern necessity's severe demands,
The wife and child were sold to distant lands.
While hope remained, my sire refused to part
The sacred tie, that bound them heart to heart;
But at the last, his bankrupt cause to hide,
He sacrificed his feeling to his pride,
And thus were parted, not in hope, the twain,
Perhaps to never meet on earth again.

XVIII.

I left the scene in hopeless discontent,
Not knowing and not caring where I went,
And soon in Charleston, wandering alone,
I found myself, unfriended and unknown.
It chanced upon the day that Sumter fell,
When Peace had spoke a hopeless, sad farewell.
The cry "To arms!" rung wildly through the crowd
Of that doomed city, of her conquest proud,
I joined the ranks, and with malicious joy,
Mingled in fights, ambitious to destroy:
War for its sake—not duty—honor—fame—

The master passion of my soul became ;
'Twas a new stimulant, and wrought as well
To give excitement, as the gambling hell;
And legalized commission of those crimes,
Which shock society in peaceful times :
Lust, rapine, murder, here excuse could find,
And deeds that leave a stain on human kind :
'Twas some relief to wounded conscience then,
To claim companionship with better men,
In the indulgence of those passions base
That first had wrought me ruin and disgrace.
Though I had nought to fight for in our cause,
My reckless daring often won applause,
For, of the boon of hope long dispossessed,
Fear, too, had grown a stranger to my breast ;
Foremost I fought, and where they thickest fell,
I rushed unharmed, amid the shot and shell,
Some evil Genius, nay, perhaps a good,
Guarded me safe on every field of blood,
Until—a healthy stimulant to fear—
The battle's yell grew music to my ear.
I mingled little with my comrades gay,
To while in sport, an idle hour away ;
Yet still my daring, and nonchalance gave
Respect and influence with the bold and brave ;

And there was one towards whom my thoughts grew
kind—

A Richmond Major, modest, and refined ;
I know not how, yet with no courtier's art,
He roused a warmer friendship in my heart
Than had been wont, since manhood's years began,
To warm my feelings towards a fellow man.
With him conversing, oft the theme would be
Of Southern Rights, Secession, Chivalry.
Though in our cause, his sympathies I found
More closely to the dear old Union wound
Than would have made him popular with those
Who were by birth and education foes.
Reserved and thoughtful, little might I gain
From the fine subtle cobwebs of his brain,
Save that—a people whom we hold in scorn—
He was among New England mudsills born,
And with his stock of Blackstone, and of Greek
To Richmond came, a lawyer's fame to seek.

XIX.

I pass—and haste to Shiloh's bloody field,
Where the sad fortunes of my friend were sealed.
I fought beside him in that fatal fray,
Through all the changing fortunes of that day,
When Beauregard compelled your cowering ranks,
To seek a shelter by the river's banks,

Upon whose bosom, murderous gunboats lay
To keep our toil-worn, conquering bands at bay.
Night snatched the hard earned victory from our
arms,
And morn awoke us to renewed alarms.
'Twas on that day, when the last charge was made
That sent to earth our shattered, lost brigade,
He fell—and reckless of my scorned life,
I bore his mangled body from the strife,
And saved him from a prisoner's fate, to die,
With one true friend to give him sympathy.
When first to conscious feeling he awoke,
The soldier vanished, and the lover spoke—
Spoke of his Julia—bade I would attend.
And be to her a messenger and friend,
Should chance to Richmond guide my wandering feet
And give me with his faithful love to meet;
Then drew a picture from his blood-stained vest,
And in these words, his dying wish expressed:
"Take this dear token, image of the one,
My light, my life, my soul's illum'ning sun!
Tell her the memory of her love and faith,
Was all my solace in the hour of death,
For these—a fearful price—my soul had given
Its all on earth—almost its hopes of heaven.
By these from honor, and from duty swayed

The voice of conscience long I disobeyed :
For love, to fight in proud Rebellion's wars,
I left the banner of the stripes and stars,
Abjured allegiance to my country due,
False, false to all—to Julia only true,
My sole reward—to me a boon more prized,
Than e'er ambition's promise realized—
The love she pledged me when this gift she gave,
That thenceforth made me a too happy slave.
It was my inspiration, and a theme
Of daily meditation, and a dream
By night—a presence with me everywhere,
As if her living presence had been there.
On battle fields, it nerved my coward hand
To grasp my rifle, or to wield the brand,
Impelled me on in mad Secession's cause,
Against the right, and honor's sacred laws.
The voice of conscience, pleading in my breast,
This dear memento but too oft suppressed.
When woke reflection, thoughts of Julia came,
To thrill my soul with love's inspiring flame ;
This was the fearful forfeit which I paid
To gain her love—TO BE RENEGADE !
Alas ! I played the part how firm and well,
You, as a living witness, best can tell.

And now I die—and oh, may Heaven forgive !
I could not wish, but for her sake, to live,
Though when I'm gone, my image soon will pass
From memory, like a picture in the glass :
In cold oblivion will the lover sleep,
With none above his nameless grave to weep.
Dark is the journey which my steps have trod.
From duty, faith, and loyalty, and God :
But God is love—for, in my soul I bear
Proofs of a blest divinity still there,
Which must endure, and in the future prove
A heaven of peace, and happiness, and love.

XX.

He ceased—and calmly sank in death's embrace,
A smile of hope still resting on his face ;
And as I gazed upon the clay-cold form,
So soon to mix with earth, or feast the worm,
I almost envied him that sweet repose—
Death's dreamless sleep—the end of earthly woes.

XXI.

Under a stately oak we buried him,
In the cool shadows of a twilight dim,
And sad and thoughtful from the scene I went
To seek repose and quiet in my tent.
There was none other—friend—companion there.

The roused affections of my soul to share;
And now almost with boyish love pined
For the lost friend—so quiet and refined.
Restless, and tossing in my dreams, I lay,
And slowly passed the solemn hours away.
Reflection came, and to my tortured brain
Brought back my boyish years and thoughts again.
I thought of Bertrand, and of home, and then
The ghost of murdered joys, THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN,
Before me rose, like shadows of the night
To Richard's view, before dread Bosworth's fight,
And on my head its withering curses fell
To press me down to the lost sinner's hell.
Repentant anguish, sorrow, and remorse
Awoke within, and stirred with serpent force;
But subtle pride their influence repelled,
And 'gainst awakened conscience I rebelled.
Thus passed the week at Corinth, where we lay
To keep, by strategy, the foe at bay.
Our shattered, conquered, and beleaguered host
Served but to make a scarecrow, at the most,
Set up to frighten that pretentious fool
Halleck—who won his victories by rule,
And not by fighting, as a Grant had done—
True they were bloodless victories when won,
And but undid what valor had begun.

Then in the changes of war's desperate game,
The order to retreat to Richmond came ;
And, unmolested, slowly day by day,
We stole from the victorious foe away,
Who toiled by night and day with busy spades,
To circumvent our empty barricades.
Had Grant been left at Corinth to assail,
The "seven days fight" had told another tale ;
But blundering Halleck to our rescue came,
And changed the desperate fortunes of the game.
Arrived at Richmond, little time was lost
There to retrieve what Shiloh's field had cost.
Meantime, 'twixt Corinth's and Pamunky's fight,
I was in Richmond. On a festive night,
It chanced I was invited as a guest
To share, with other friends, a soldier's feast :
Proud and pretentious was the scene displayed,
But what passed there will ne'er from memory fade.
Luxury, and taste, and elegance combined,
To please at once, and captivate the mind.
No novice I that needed to be told,
That all that glitters is not genuine gold :
Restless I wandered through the gorgeous rooms,
To me, less pleasing than the twilight glooms
That darken in those lone cathedral aisles,]

Where never ray of golden sunshine smiles.
These called up the fond memories of home,
Ere from its peaceful scenes compelled to roam.
Musing I sat, when lo, before my eye,
A form of grace and loveliness swept by.
Attired in robes of beauty—like the sun
Her bright smiles warmed whate'er they shone upon.
Center, round which the "lesser lights," controlled
By strong attraction, in their orbits rolled.
At sight, I felt a magic influence
Beguiling, like a dream, my powers of sense;
And by the living likeness so impressed,
I drew the lover's likeness from my vest—
It was the same; but wore in pictured dress,
A charm more tender, but a beauty less.
I looked upon the Julia of my friend,
And saw in her, pride, grace, and passion blend
In such proportions fair, as had a charm
Cold calculating logic to disarm;
Nor could I wonder that my friend had given,
Almost his only, dearest hopes of heaven
To be her slave, and wear those pleasing chains,
Where Love the tyrant, with such beauty reigns.
My skeptic heart assailed, began to thaw,
And melt before the brightness that I saw:

I could have knelt in homage, who so blind,
Till now, had satirized all womankind,
And saw in it, no worth except what gold
Could buy, and lawful merchandize, when sold.
My coward heart beat audibly—afraid
To meet the friend's injunctions on me laid—
To one so proud, so queenly, and so fair,
A dying lover's message sad to bear:
But soon resolved—the duty to be done:
No more with doubtful auguries, I shun,
But seek, as best I could, occasion fair,
The mournful, solemn tidings to declare.

XXII.

Ceased was the music's strains—the laughter loud,
That echoed gaily through the festal crowd
Had died away in silence. From the tower
The solemn bell had told the midnight hour,
And few remained of the invited guests,
Who came to share the pleasures of the feast.
Fair Julia a brief respite to obtain,
From simpering smiles, and compliments as vain,
Withdrew—and following her, we stood alone,
As strangers—but I felt reserve was gone.
Silent I drew the likeness from my breast,
And gave to her. She augured of the rest;

As marble pale, convulsively she grasped
My hand, and held it long and wildly clasped,
With an expression of that tragic grief,
To which no tear—no word—might bring relief.
At last she spoke:—"I would not hear you tell
The tale—he died in battle—it is well!
The cause is worthy of the sacrifice,
And not in vain lamented Clarence dies.
Were I not woman, my avenging steel,
Should teach his ruthless murderers how to feel."
She paused—his dying words I then expressed,
That went, like foemen's daggers to her breast.
Despite her firmness, pity and remorse
Pulled at her heart-strings with relentless force,
But wrung no tear drop from her fiery eye—
The sealed-up fountains of her soul were dry,
While rebel pride in her fond bosom strove,
To conquer the wild pathos of her love.
She fixed her look upon me—paused again,
And spoke the words, that echoed mental pain.
'You were his friend?' for this—her thanks expressed,
My hand, at parting, solemnly she pressed,
Invited me again, and with an air
Subdued by grief—too haughty for despair,
Bade me adieu. My homeward way I wend,
Musing upon the mistress, and the friend.

XXIII.

'Twas more than midnight—the expiring lamp
Burned dim—and save the solitary tramp
Of some benighted traveler, no sound
Broke on the stillness of the night profound;
And near an ancient churchyard as I passed,
I saw a misty form before me cast
Its shadowy outline, indistinct and dim—
I almost fancied it the ghost of him—
The friend, and lover, from its quiet sent,
To haunt a loitering dreamer to his tent.
Nearer it came— I stood, and bade it stand—
It paused, obedient to my firm command,
And in a trembling, supplicating tone,
Begged me at once to make my wishes known.
A woman's voice—I read the poor disguise
Assumed to cheat far more discerning eyes,
A helpless, wandering fugitive I saw,
Escaped from the harsh tyranny of law.
Truth flashed upon my mind; before me stood
The wife of Bertrand—living flesh and blood.
Myself unknown, I bade she would disclose
The story of her wanderings, and woes,
And pledged myself a friend, her schemes to aid :
She hesitated, trembled, and obeyed.

Brief be the sequel—nameless perils past—
To Richmond, fortune brought her safe at last.
And she had learned that in a dungeon's gloom,
A husband here did wait a traitor's doom.
And now she came disguised, with hope to save
By fortune's favor, and redeem the brave,
In bondage chained, from hope, and love exiled,
Relentless fate had robbed her of her child,
And given him up once more, to what were worse
To the despairing heart than Ishmael's curse.
And when no tidings of the husband came
To stir the dying embers of a flame
Kindled by hope, but slowly day by day,
Wasting, for want of nourishment, away,
Despair had urged through battle scenes to roam,
To find the lost one, or to share his doom.
To Libby prison, now she sought to find
Admittance, and if fortune might be kind,
To cheat the guard, she deemed the task were light,
To steal him, in disguise, away by night.
Confidingly I whispered in her ear
The name of Rookwood, once a word of fear,
She knelt before me, mute, imploringly,
Surprise and terror imaged in her eye,
Entreated, begged my sympathy and aid,

As one who wished to trust, and yet afraid.
I calmed her terrors—bade she would attend,
And trust me as a counsellor and friend:
I pictured all the perils to be braved,
And gave my pledge that Bertrand should be saved.
Could I a pardon or reprieve obtain,
He should not long endure the felon's chain.

XXIV.

I left her trusting, hopeful—to my tent,
To court repose, reflectingly I went;
But ever and anon before me rose
Fair Julia's image, and forbade repose;
For love had come an uninvited guest
To find at last a welcome in my breast:
I felt and owned the magic of her charms,
And when I slept, I woke in Julia's arms;
The more against that influence I strove,
The more I felt the conquering power of Love;
But Clarence' threat'ning ghost seemed ever near,
To chill my rising hopes with doubt and fear.

XXV.

I need not tell the tale, so often told,
Of a blind passion, fierce, and uncontrolled:
I sought by lover's art her heart to gain,
But only met with coldness and disdain.

I, who had prized as of so little worth,
That richest treasure man may share on earth—
Woman's pure love—was now, alas! to find
The logic of my creed paid back in kind.
Had the world's treasures at my feet been laid,
All in exchange most freely had I paid
For that sole prize in which I had no part,
The affections of that haughty woman's heart.
But there was one in Libby's walls confined,
To whom crazed Fortune, in her dealings blind,
Had given to share, if not her love, the smile,
That could with hope the prisoner's heart beguile.
Him, hopeless pining in the prison's gloom
She met, and by that meeting changed his doom
From doubt to hope, and liberty, and life,
To claim proud Bertrand's daughter for his wife,
For such is she, in whose proud virgin veins,
Some taint of dark dishonor still remains.
The son, for whose redemption I was bound
By honor, and my pledges to compound,
In Libby prison, long I sought in vain,
It was the sister's hand unbound the chain.
By chance she learned the history, and set
Her will, to cancel what was honor's debt.
She sought and found him in his prison cell,

And ransomed at a price I shun to tell.
I have a secret that might cost the head
Of one I had no cause to mourn, if dead,
My rival, false and treacherous to both—
His country's cause, and to his plighted troth ;
Who left a fairer in his native land,
To share the honor of fair Julia's hand.
Chance, to my ears of perfidy revealed,
A tale, which honor bids me keep concealed.
This truth alone I shun not to declare :
The page of Julia is young Bertrand's heir.

XXVI.

He ceased. Agatha with a cheek as pale
As marble heard the ending of the tale ;
Instinctively th' unwelcome truth she caught,
To her with fearful agony so fraught.
Hope in her bosom, nursed so fondly, died ;
She knew another was her Wilfried's bride ;
His honor stained, his loyalty at cost
Of all she valued in a lover, lost.
The tale gave credence, nay stamped truth on all
Report had whispered of brave Wilfreid's fall.
Ah, had she known temptations that assailed,
And o'er the weakness of the man prevailed,
She might have pitied—pardoned that he gave

His slow consent, to be himself a slave.
She might not guess how providence designed
By dealing thus, to prove its purpose kind.
For her loved country, freely had she given
Her love, her life, a sacrifice to Heaven ;
But blind to Fate's decrees, in Wilfreid's fall,
She drank too deep the wormwood and the gall ;
Without that pride that nerves the sterner heart
To bear desertion, and conceal the smart,
There is a grief that feeds upon the mind,
No time can soften, and no will can bind,
What though we seek its tortures to beguile,
And the glad brow put on a cheerful smile,
Yet when it stirs within, we feel it there,
With all the freshness of unweaned despair.
Not such was thine, fair Agatha—at first,
A calm and sacred sorrow, it was nursed,
But Hope and Patience were the fruits it bore,
Then vanished, like a dream to come, no more.

XXVII.

But where is Bertrand? With attentive ear,
He listened from proud Rookwood's lips to hear
The words that told a secret vaguely guessed,
That stirred the latent passions in his breast.
His cheek grew flushed with hope—with anger pale,

As changed the varying features of the tale,
Till Lizzy's name, upon the speaker's tongue,
Awoke the bitter memories of her wrong;
But with these memories, hope's inspiring flame
Thrilled, like electric sparks through all his frame.
She lived—was free—and they would meet again,
Nor bear the galling weight of Slavery's chain.
He must to Richmond, and in rebel guise
Redeem his treasures, and enjoy the prize.
Fired with such thoughts, he stole unseen away,
To seek his General's quarters ere the day
Should flush with twilight pale, the morning sky:
Hope in his heart, and love's light in his eye.
And musing through the forest as he traced
His dewy path along the lonely waste,
Where Antietam's slow, melancholy wave
Waters with flooding tears, the soldiers' nameless
grave,
Through twilight's misty shadows dimly viewed,
Before him, motionless as statute, stood
The form disguised, he met upon the night
Before the morn that brought Antietam's fight.
With doubts, that bred strange auguries in his heart,
He questioned: "Quick, resolve me, who thou art!
Or foe, or friend, thy name, thy purpose tell,

Thou ghostly wanderer in this lonely dell:
Perhaps—some rebel spy—you seek to know
A secret which a loyal friend could show?
Brief be thy speech, and truthful and sincere—
A rebel falsehood now might cost thee dear.”

“Soldier! I have wandered here,
In the wildwood, many a year,
Free from danger, or alarm—
There is none would do me harm.
A poor, wandering gypsy, I,
By the planets of the sky,
By the mirrored brook, do see
Fates which in the future be.
By the lines upon your hand,
I your destiny command;
For by these is prescience given,
To reveal the will of Heaven.
Thou a soldier—let my art
Mystic truths to thee impart.
Though the gypsy’s curse I bear,
Faithfully I will declare
What of fortune shall betide—
Nearer—sit thee by my side:
By yon star’s pale, shimmering light,
I will read the fates aright.

Slight my guerdon shall be,
'Tis not gold I crave of thee.
Mark these lines!—beware—beware!
There are demons in the air,
Round about thee everywhere.
Before me now I see them pass,
Like reflections in the glass,
Treachery, ruin they portend—
But to save, there comes a friend.
Now 'tis shadow all, and gloom,
As the darkness of the tomb.
Destiny above thy head
Hangs as by a single thread,
And upon its issues wait
That which turns the scales of fate.
Battle shouts are on the gale—
Now the demon spirits quail,
Or in vain, the Right assail.
Now the mighty work is done—
Nobly is the victory won;
But across the rack of heaven,
Thick, sulphurous clouds are driven,
Wide and wider they expand,
Low'ring dark o'er all the land.
Yet I may not tell thee all

That is fated to befall.
Should I speak of son, or wife,
Dearer to thee far, than life,
That pursues thee, wandering far
Through the murky clouds of war
Seeking rest and finding none,
'Tis the web the fates have spun.
Thou art—God ! Oh, can it be?—
It is Bertrand that I see !

XXVIII.

She sprang and sank in his embracing arms,
No maddened sybil, muttering her charms,
But dearer to his soul than fame, or life—
A loving woman, and a faithful wife.
The rapture of that meeting, so expressed,
Was like the soul's sweet sunshine to each breast.
All the long agony—the toils, the tears
Of weary, saddened, melancholy years
Were there forgotten. Pen has not the power
To paint the scene—the rapture of that hour.
Tearful to heaven, he raised hands and prayed
For faith, forgiveness, and sustaining aid.
The aspirations of his earlier years—
Their joys and sorrows, sunny smiles and tears,
Called up afresh, inspired with rapturous joy—

Hope made the grief-worn man, again a boy.
To mar his happiness one care alone
Remained—the memory of a darling son.
In Richmond, wearing Slavery's golden chain
That pledge is left—it must not there remain.
Though 'twas his happier fortune yet to share
The love, and kindness of a sister's care,
It mattered not how light those chains were worn.
It was the fearful curse himself had borne,
Whom fickle Fortune, with relentless frown,
Had plunged in Misery's gulf so fiercely down,
Then raised, from blackest shadows of despair,
The sweetest sunshine of her smile to share.

XXIX.

It boots not now, to trace the varying tale,
Or from the future lift the shadow veil,
And tell how fortune gave the son to claim
His rightful title to a hero's fame.
How Justice thus to vindicate her cause
By virtue of stern Confiscation's laws,
Decreed to the disowned and outlawed son
The wealth which a disloyal sire had won
By sequestration, violence, and wrong,
And toil rewarded by the goading throng,
That nameless hero of Antietam's fight,

In Richmond henceforth vindicates his right,
And shares the blessings bounteous Heaven bestows,
As recompense for all his wrongs and woes.

* * * * *

In Rookwood mansion there is joy to-night;
In Rookwood halls the starry lamps are bright;
For now the wandering prodigal is come,
To share once more the welcome of a home
Blest with a loyal, fair and loving bride,
O'er all his cares and pleasures to preside.
Reclaimed by love from error's sinful ways,
How bright the promise of his future days.
He joys to see the flag of Freedom wave
Over a land that sees no pining slave.
Thy love fair Agatha, the guiding star,
That led the dark, benighted traveler
From sin and folly, and from Error's maize
To walk again in Virtue's pleasant ways.
A prouder triumph Heaven accords to thee
Than to the hero of a victory,
Bought with the price of blood—the orphan's sighs,
And tears that dim the weeping widows' eyes;
Though his great name descend from age to age,
Immortalized on lying History's page,
And thine as modest as thy worth, may claim
No clarion note from the loud trump of fame.

NAOMI.

There is not, perhaps in all the wide field of literature, anything so affecting and beautiful as the Book of Ruth, taken as a mere literary production, or a "Love Story," if we choose to call it such. The first chapter is indescribably pathetic. There is nothing in Shakspeare, Bulwer, or Victor Hugo, that makes an approach to it in this excellence, and yet it seems to have been written with no design to affect. It is a simple narrative—a picture of purely disinterested affection, which has so many admirers but so few imitators. Naomi, coming back to her native city, stripped of everything but the love of her Moabitish daughter—her entering into the busy city, and "all the city being moved," and saying "Is this Naomi?" is such a representation of misfortune as can never be surpassed. The simple exclamation "is this Naomi!" finishes the picture at one bold stroke and is the very climax of the pathetic.

A lone sojourner in a foreign land
Naomi lived—of all her kindred band,
Orpah and Ruth alone remained to bless
Her weary lot, and share its loneliness.
Her sons—their husbands—long ago had died :
She had no husband, and no hope beside.
And she arose to seek that home again,
From which she wandered, on Judea's plain ;
And, with her daughters, journeyed on the way
Towards where her native hills of Bethlehem lay.

They went together till they saw arise,
Their azure summits towering to the skies.
Return, my daughters, then Naomi said,
And as ye have dealt with me, and with the dead,
So kindly deal the God of heaven with you—
Receive my blessing, and a last adieu.
Each to a loving mother's home return;
Why should ye longer for a husband mourn?
In your own land find happiness and rest,
And in a future husband's house, be blest:
And speaking thus, she kissed them to depart
In sad, and lonely widowhood of heart.
They wept—and in the freshness of their wo,
Said, "to thy land and people will we go."
Nay, turn, my daughters, then she spake again:
What hope, or promise should with me remain?
Had I a husband, would ye yet delay,
Till sons were grown to be your husbands? Nay.
Return; for, for your sakes it grieves me sore,
That God has left me childless, old, and poor.
Again they wept; and Orpah bent to kiss,
And left Naomi in her loneliness.
But with a deeper love, to her embrace
Her sister clung to hide her weeping face,
Saying, "Entreat me not to leave thee so;

Whither thou goest, thither will I go;
Thy God, thy people shall be ever mine.
And to thee always will my heart incline.
Nothing shall part us, till th' embrace of death,
Shall chill affection with expiring breath."

And so they fared together on their way,
Until they came to where proud Bethlehem lay,
Glittering in splendor of the noontide ray;
And when they entered in the busy street,
The wondering city came in crowds to greet
The stricken mourner, as she bowed her head—
"Is this Naomi?" all the people said.
Oh, call me not Naomi, she replied,
Since by afflictions I am sorely tried:
Let Mara henceforce be the name I bear,
Expressive of the bitter grief I share.

LOVE AND AMBITION.

In a blossom-scented orchard;
It was many a year ago;
That I wandered in the May-time,
When the fields were all aglow
With the crimson-tinted blossoms,—
While the song of birds and bees,
Rose to heaven in dreamy cadence,
Sweetly on the passing breeze.

It was there I sat a-dreaming
In a heaven of sight and sound—
A blue smiling sky above me,
And Infinity around.

Should I paint for you the picture,
Which my boyish fancy drew,
You would see upon the canvass
Colors blending—false and true—

Youth beguiled by young Ambition
Pointing up the heights of Fame,
On its blinding, dizzy summits
Saying only, "Write a name!"

Love, too, pleading with a soul-power;
And a cherub smile, not dumb :
Saying, "like the birds in May-time
Build, 'mid scenes so fair, a home."
"On, still onward !" cries ambition;
Love says only—pointing there—
" 'Tis a falsehood, and I warn thee,
Be not dazzled by its glare."
By me is an angel presence,
Sent by Love's command to save,
Ere I lauched me for a voyage,
On ambition's fatal wave.

But a shadow crept between us,
And hope vanished into air ;
Then it left me not ambition,
But a presence named Despair ;
And through deserts, parched and thirsty,
Sad I journeyed from the scene,
Haunted by a Spectre ever,
With a wail, " It might have been."

Foot-sore, weary with my wanderings,
Now I pitch my tent once more,
By the wayside, where fresh waters
From the rock's rent bosom pour.

Oh, this Meribah of Deserts !
Which the thirsty pilgrim greets :
In its virtues there is healing—
In its bitter there are sweets.

In that blossom-scented orchard,
Since I've wandered many a May ;
But have heard, alas ! no music
Sweet as was its voice that day.
There are grand old harmonies,
That like peals of thunder roll,
Bringing ever Night and Tempest
On the Sunshine of my soul.

And I hear a dirge-like music,
That with organ thunderings swell,
Blending in its diapason
One discordant note—Farewell !

MADELINE.

Sweet Madeline ! since first by chance we met,
That rapturous meeting how should I forget
Till grace and beauty cease to charm the eye,
Or love of virtue in the soul shall die.
A Cleopatra's, or a Helen's charms
That murdered hearts, and set the world in arms,
Are thine, without the weakness that were theirs—
With voice as musical as summer airs,
You breathe such tones of spirit, melody
Upon my ear, the soul of harmony
Is soothed, but burdened by that sweet refrain
Which breathes enchantment like a god in pain.
Oh, who that tastes such sweetness but most pour
His soul away in passion, and adore.
Did Fortune to the worthiest give the gem,
Thy brow were decked with queenly diadem.
But no—thou scornest such vain pageanty,
And seek'st no homage but what love can buy.
Naomi's blessing might upon thee rest,
Could man be found so worthy to be blest ;
But where, alas ! a Boaz shall we find,

Worthy the jewel in thy soul enshrined ?
Heaven shows thee as a model of its art
In making woman with a HEAD and HEART.
It gave thee beauty, but for once, denied
Its curse in woman—vanity and pride.
For since Eve was from Paradise exiled,
That cunning serpent has too oft beguiled
Her fairest daughters, and to mar Love's plan
Makes beauty still a snare to fallen man.
But you are tempered with such virtues rare,
As to the tempter's self have proved a snare,
Since formed so pure, it baffles still his art
To gain stern Virtue's fortress in thy heart,
And, foiled so oft, he shrinks away ashamed,
When the charmed word of "Madeline" is named.

THE VISION.

Spectral shadows were around me,
Where relentless Fate had bound me
Prisoner in the desolation
Of a ghostly, living tomb.
And at vesper hour in sadness,
I was musing of the gladness
Of the past, till thought seemed madness,
As I pondered on my doom,
When I saw a Presence entering
Silently my lonely room,
Like a messenger of doom.

And I shuddered ; for the feature
Of that gaunt, misshapen creature
Bore the semblance of a demon
From the confines of that shore,
Where the awful Stygian river
Rolls its ghostly waves forever,
And a voice that ceases never,
Shrieks above its sullen roar
Like the wail of a lost spirit

To whom hope shall come no more,
Still repeating evermore.

And the look so unrelenting,
As of murderer unrepenting,
Which that demon from the darkness
Of the Halls of Eblis wore,
Glared upon me fierce, defiant,
With the vengeance of a giant,
Till no longer self-reliant
From the tortures that I bore,
Sank my weary, fainting spirit,
And Hope smiled on me no more.
And it whispered nevermore!

Silently I gazed and pondered,
As with demon voice it thundered,
Sounding wrathful, dread and hollow
Through each echoing corridore—
“Mortal, yield and bow before me;
Do my bidding, and adore me,
Or by this dread sceptre o’er me
Hope with thee shall soon be o’er!
I command thy destiny
Till life’s latest day is o’er”—
Echo answered evermore!

Here I reign supreme, unsparing;
Who the mortal that so daring
• Shall refuse to do me homage?

He shall feel my vengeance sore.
Look! on every side around thee
Are my subjects—they have bound thee,
And with crown of thorns have crowned thee,
Such as fools have worn before;
Thou my subject art, and shall be
Henceforth and forevermore."

And a voice said Evermore!

Then upon that Shape infernal,
Strengthened by a power supernal,
With a scorn, and with a courage
To my soul unknown before,
Looked me, with an eye undaunted;
And I spoke: "Fiend that hast vaunted
Of thy vengeance—and hast taunted
Me with weakness, boast no more!

Hie thee into Stygian darkness—
Hide thee there forevermore."

And it answered evermore.

While the spectral lights burned dimmer,
And the stars of twilight shimmer

Through the white and misty curtains
Which to veil their forms they wore.

And the goblin form retreating
From the conflict of that meeting,
Left me, at the word repeating:

“Hell-born, hence and come no more!

Rule henceforth in thy dominions
On thy own dark Stygian shore!”

Echoed back dark Stygian shore.

Long I pondered on the “Vision”

Till from heavenly fields Elysian

There appeared, bright as an angel,

One whom I had met before.

Clothed in robes of dazzling whiteness,

Tinted with the rainbow’s brightness,

And with step of eager lightness,

The same joyous look she wore

Which had charmed away my sadness,

In the happy days of yore,

When to love was to adore.

Yet she coyly smiled to greet me,

That did oft so kindly meet me

By the brookside, in the starlight,

Of a far-off, sunny shore,

Where I wandered, dreaming ever
Of a land beyond the river,
Whose bright Eden fields forever
Robes of richest beauty wore.

And I turned away in sorrow,
That she smiled on me no more,
As in happier days of yore.

And I beckoned to her sadly,
Prayed, entreated, wept, and madly
In my sorrow, in my anguish,
Knelt, her pity to implore—
From despairing shrieks, heart-rending,
With wild, mocking laughter blending,
Ever and anon ascending
Up each echoing corridore,
To redeem—and to inspire me
With the light of hope once more—
Echo answered, “ Hope once more !”

And she turned upon me, smiling
With a welcome so beguiling
That I SMILED, despite the memories
In my wrung heart's inmost core—
Memories of wrongs and sorrows,
Sad to-days, and false to-morrows,

From which Pain no solace borrows,
And heart-yearnings that still bore
In the morn, and eve, and midnight,
Record of LIGHTS gone before—
Of the loved and gone before.

Then she spake—and while I listened,
Brighter burned the lights, and glistened
Clearer in the mellow twilight
Stars that dimmed their light before—
“Vain, O, mortal! the endeavor,
From the web of Fate to sever
Warp and woof that run forever,
Stretching to that viewless shore.
Of the dim, uncertain future,
Which no mortal may explore.”
Echoed faintly ‘may explore.’

Trust me—and that trust shall arm thee.
’Gainst the foeman that alarm thee
Mailed in panoply and armor
Dread as fierce Apolyon wore.
Trust—and cease thy fruitless toiling—”
And she turn upon me smiling
With a sweetness so beguiling
Like herself in years before,

That I could but bow in homage
To the goddess, and adore.

And I worshipped as before.

When another form of beauty,
Whom to love, were but a duty
Of the poet, strangely gifted
In Love's deep, mysterious lore,
Rose before me—while upraising,
In my sad abstraction gazing,
Mute I stood, and mutely praising
Charms that won my love before,
'Ere we parted in the twilight
Of a far-off sunny shore :

Where we wandered to adore.

Ah, that parting I remember!
It was in the mild September,
When the ripe and blushing Autumn
Robes of gorgeous beauty wore.
There we sat together, dreaming
Of—alas! no future teaming
With its hopes—no love-light beaming
On us, as in years before,
Ere a Fiend stood fiercely guarding,
Of lost Paradise the door;
Barring entrance evermore.

At the vesper hour we parted,
Solemn, sad, and weary-hearted,
 So to wander on our journey,
 Not to meet, as lovers, more.
(Love was never unrequited ;)
Though no sacred vows were plighted,
Yet our spirits were united
 When the dream of hope was o'er,
 While the mocking fiend forever,
Stood to guard that temple's door,
 Which we ne'er might enter more.

But to seek her native skies,
To a heavenly Paradise,
 Far too soon the maiden wandered
 On that undiscovered shore,
From whose bourne no more returning,
With its love and glory burning,
Comes a traveler, till the morning
 Dawns,—when Time shall be no more
 And the “seven thunders” utter
Voices, fearful as the roar
 Of that echo “Nevermore.”

Yet I saw her in my Vision,
From her home in fields Elysian,

Smiling on me with the love-light
Which in mortal form she wore.
And I felt it on me beaming,
With a strange, unearthly seeming,
From the mournful Past redeeming
Of sweet memories a store,
Which were buried, when the maiden
To her church-yard rest they bore,
And I learned to love no more.

Still she smiled—my lost Ideal,
Till a feeling—vague—unreal
Stealing o'er me, with its dimness,
From my sight the vision bore.
Fast into the shadows fleeting,
Then I saw her form retreating
From that silent, farewell meeting
That should glad my heart no more ;
Like lost Eurydice she wandered
Back to seek the shadowy shore,
And, like her, to come no more.

And I woke 'mid sights unholy,
Laughter, groans, and melancholy
Shrieks of madness, oaths and curses
Such as angry demons swore,

Who in Halls of Eblis groaning,
In mad, unrepentant moaning,
For their earthly sins atoning,
Allah's fearful vengeance bore ;
But the Seraph stood before me,
Smiling as she smiled before,
When the name of HOPE she bore.

Episode from an unpublished Poem, entitled "Marius."

THE COQUETTE.

In a small village, where, I need not say,
Lived a fair maiden, sweet as dawning May;
Perfection—almost—if you could forget
The fault she had—the fault of a coquette,
Who loved too well, through vanity or pride
To lay old fashions and old loves aside.
Careless and free, with Cupid's winged darts,
She waged a savage war on lovers' hearts.
When once she drew her bow, she aimed so well
Upon his knees th' unhappy victim fell
And sued for mercy; but his sighs and prayers
Were in her ears but common-place affairs.
They could not thaw the coldness of a heart
That gloried in the triumphs of an art.
And though she murdered lovers by the score,
Yet still the fools besieged her heart the more:
Like moths around the candle's flame by night,
Their eyes were blinded by excess of light,
Till by too close approach they singed their wings,
And burned in flames that brought repentant stings.

Like blundering, blockhead beetles there were some,
Who, first at distance, raised a droning hum,
Till drawn into the vortex of her charms,
They felt, and owned the force of Cupid's arms.
But yet too dull to feel Love's sweetest pain,
Cold, passive subjects of her scornful reign,
These bowed in tame submission to her will,
But blunted all the darts she sent to kill.
But there was one—a boy who loved to dream
In haunted castle, or by mountain stream;
Or, by the midnight lamp, unseen to pore
Over some page of antiquated lore.
Who oft had stood, an idly-dreaming boy,
With blind old Homer, by the walls of Troy,
To list the music of resounding arms,
Or gaze enraptured on a Helen's charms;
Or with brave Hector, from the Scæan gate,
Roll back the tide of conquest and of fate;
Or with him seek Andromache the fair,
The rapture of a parting kiss to share;
Living in regions of romance and song,
When most he mingled with the busy throng.
Oft in some quiet, solitary nook
You'd see him dreaming with a friend, or book;
But seldom at the midnight masquerade—

He sought no inspiration from the aid
Of painted Beauty in her foreign dress,
But was in love with Nature to excess.
Above him, and around him everywhere,
He conjured up sweet Ariels of the air,
Till with a bright creation of his own,
Familiar, and enamored he had grown;
And through this gorgeous atmosphere of mind
He saw the world with vision so refined
That contact with its elements in gross
Taught him to look upon its gold as dross.
Friendship and Love, to him, were not such things
As might at cold adversity take wings,
And fly away to make themselves a home,
Where Poverty or Sorrow might not come.
In mysteries learned, as taught in nature's school,
He was in the world's science but a fool,
Much unlike Dryden's, for he ne'er was caught
A "whistling as he went, for want of thought."
He met this maiden and he now began,
Like Cymon, first to feel himself a man.
Her wit, her loveliness, her form divine,
To metamorphose all his powers combine.
His books grew tedious, and he sought no more
His lonely haunts, o'er classic themes to pore,

This Iphigenia now to him became
An inspiration, and awoke a flame
That burned within, and preyed upon his mind,
Till, like the god he worshipped, he grew blind.
Blind to the faults of one who scornful smiled
To see the victim by her arts beguiled.
Industriously her siren spells she weaves,
And smiles upon, and flatters, and deceives,
Binding him faster in love's silken chain,
To triumph in his ecstasy of pain,
Till Cupid, jealous of his scorned art,
Shot a keen arrow at the maiden's heart
With aim so true it pierced th' unguarded part.
Like haughty Dido though she owned the shame,
Her woman weakness could not quench the flame;
She felt the retribution for those sins,
Which stubborn justice from the sinner wins;
But desperate still, she summoned all her pride,
The wound that rankled in her breast to hide.
And when the lover knelt her hand to gain,
She wore a smile of conquest and disdain,
And chilled the warm emotions of her heart,
As if she still must triumph in her art.
Then with cold, formal courtesy repaid
The frank confession of the love he made.

Deaf to the pleadings of her rebel heart,
She bade the lover without hope depart,
But with the thought that he would come again,
And tell anew the secret of his pain.

He came no more, but left his mountain home,
A restless wanderer round the world to roam.
How changed from him who once had loved to dream
In shadowy dell, beside the mountain stream !
In foreign climes in vain he sought to find
Some medicine to cure a fevered mind,
And Rome beheld him 'mid her ruins vast,
Musing on relics of a glorious Past.
Her crumbling arches and her moss-grown towers,
Oft saw him lingering at vesper hours,
To trace the history of her Cæsars' times,
In these sad relics of her wars and crimes.
What Carthage was to Marius, such to him
This modern Rome in all that glory dim
Shed by the past upon her mighty fame
Roman no more, and only Rome in name.
He sees with awe the haunting ghost of Time
Stalking amid old ruins—vast—sublime.
Before him flits the solitary owl,
Ancient and solemn as that Popish Ghoul,
Who built an Altar upon fallen thrones,

And made her heaven of purgatorial groans.
Oft stood to see—where Genius lingers still—
The sunset fading from the Pincian Hill,
Where forms of Beauty and of Art divine,
In colors softer than the rainbow shine,
And Raphael's genius in a Claude appears,
Fresh through the twilight of a thousand years.
In Greece—of men, the glory and the shame,
He saw the Greatness of a perished name.
He stood in Athens, upon Mars' hill
Where Paul once preached, and saw the altar still,
Built for the worship of an "unknown god."
And o'er the dust of classic ages trod.
Alas! this Athens of a modern day—
Shrined in the memories of the past she lay,
Glorious in ruin—hope forever fled,
She stands alone—the mourner with her dead:
Though here and there a ray of glory shone,
'Twas but a star in absence of that sun,
Which, at Chæroneæ set, no more to rise,
And chase the twilight darkness from her skies.
Onward, still on, in restless discontent
He roamed—with wandering Ishmael pitched his tent
On Carmel's top, where once Elijah stood—
The lone, but awful messenger of God,
Mid Jezebel's four hundred, that had prayed

In vain to Baal, and their gods for aid—
Odds 'gainst which Truth too often must contend,
Yet conquers through the God that is her friend.
He stood at midnight upon Olive's brow,
But saw no Savior—all was darkness now.
What deep emotions in his bosom swell,
As on his ear these solemn accents fell:
"Sleep on and take your rest; for now the hour
Is come"—brief triumph of Satanic power.
In sad Jerusalem's deserted shrine,
He reads the mysteries of Truth divine,
And feels a thrill of more than mortal awe,
To trace the imprint of Jehovah's law,
Written in characters that shall not die
Till Time is merged into Eternity.
O'er all that boundless desolation spread,
Fulfilled poetic prophecy he read.

Now worn with travel, to his native shore
The weary wanderer is returned once more,
And 'mid familiar scenes of "long ago,"
Upon his cheeks the mountain breezes blow.
A thoughtful, sad, and solitary man,
His pulse beats fitful, and his look grows wan,
The wisdom treasured in his pilgrimage,
To early manhood gave the cast of age;

Man was the volume which in Nature's book
He studied most; and from the theme he took
Those lessons in mad skepticism's school,
That made e'en Volney but a learned fool,
Who in his fine-wrought frenzy vainly calls
To "Holy Sepulchres and Silent Walls,"
To read him lessons which they never taught
To those who read their sermons as they ought.
Philosophy and Science uninspired,
Like a coquette, shine but to be admired;
Though dazzled and bewildered by the glare
Of genius, in a Volney or Voltaire,
We catch no inspiration from a theme,
Which makes true, soul religion but a dream;
We feel, too deeply feel 'twere vain to strive
To keep Hope's fast-decaying flame alive
Without that nourishment which Faith supplies,
Drawn from perennial fountains in the skies.
But cold Materialism binds us fast
In chains that link the Present with the Past,
Leaving the future unexplored and dark,
Till Faith finds shipwreck in her sinking ark.
He found—a hackneyed phrase, too oft employed—
Within his soul there was an restless void,
And longed for what in science is not found—

Some "Balm in Gilead" that would heal the wound,
But found too oft, among the priestly tribe
Some ranting quack, commissioned to prescribe,
In whom he saw revealed the man of sin,
Smooth-skinned without, and leprosy within.
To whom had Truth's pure waters been applied,
The man had sickened with disgust and died.
The Priest and Levite nicely he would scan,
But sometimes wronged the Good Samaritan;
Because—though from their selfish practice free—
He often kept ungodly company.

Boston! proud Athens of our western world,
Where first young Freedom's banner was unfurled;
Genius of Lexington and Bunker Hill!
Wearing a halo of that glory still,
Which shone around thee in that fated hour,
When haughty England felt, and owned thy power.
Boston, immortal in thy youthful fame!
Of Yankeedom, the glory and the shame.
Who that beholds thee now in all that pride
To Genius, Fashion, or to Wealth allied,
But does in thy all changing phases see,
Of human life, a true epitome.
Once humble, and industriously poor,
Vice, as a courtier, ne'er besieged thy door,

When to make love, false, foolish Fashion come,
The answer to her call was, "Not at home."
False Adulation found no audience, where
Fools grin and flatter, and the stupid stare.
But growing greatness by unseen degrees
Sowed in thy social system rank disease,
Till Vice and Wealth has made thee what thou art—
A proud old vixen, ossified at heart,
Coquetting in the ripeness of thy charms
To woo some gay, young lover to thy arms.
Mingled in thee, those borrowed airs are seen
That grace a wanton, or disgrace a queen.
That which preserves thee from corruption's taint
Is Genius—not the virtues of a saint.

Five years had passed, since parting with the man
She loved—and Iphigenia now began
To sigh and tremble at a coquette's fate—
She read with tears, the fearful words, "too late!"
Morning and night, when as he said adieu,
The form of her lost lover rose to view.
Long had she waited, sighed, and hoped, and wept,
And more than faithful to the memory kept
Of him her pride had sent unblest away,
To come no more to woo her since that day.
"Would he would come" she oft exclaimed and sighed,

“And wherefore come?” her guilty heart replied—

“To be for pride, for mockery, a jest?

He, of mankind the truest, and the best.

No, could his pride excuse the bitter wrong,

For this, my love for him should be less strong.”

Alas! in life how often hopes are wrecked

By faults and follies which we least suspect.

She felt the cankering wound that would not heal,

And pains, her pride had oft made others feel:

Her spirits saddened, and upon her face,

Suffering and time had left a deeper trace,

While injured lovers, safe from future harms,

Beheld revenge in all her faded charms,

Flatterers no more thronged round her to adore,

As bankrupt Beauty there is naught so poor.

But yesterday, a conquering queen she reigned—

To-day forgotten, slighted, or disdained.

Oh sealed mystery—the Human Heart!

How may we hope to paint thee as thou art,

Changeful as Proteus in each new disguise,

Assumed t' elude the search of prying eyes.

Thou deck'st the brow with smiles to hide within

The thought to hopeless misery akin.

Mute, arch deceiver from whose fountain flow

The gushing streams of rapture, or of we,

Who has the wisdom of a Solomon,
May read thee wisely, but no other can.

Sad Iphigene still by Remorse pursued,
To seek for rest, must fly from solitude,
Like that proud dame the ruthless hell-hounds tore
In just revenge for murdered Theodore,
She feels the vengeance for her guilt, and pangs.
More cruel than the ghostly Huntsman's fangs.
She sought that city of Athenean fame,
Unconscious half for what intent she came,
Change, change she sought—'twas fearful to remain
Where all the past inspired her soul with pain:
The murmuring stream, the song of bird or bee,
The night-wind moaning through the leafless tree
Brought home-sick feeling to her tortured breast,
And Love denied her weary spirit rest.
Morn brought no pleasures and the night no dreams
That were not sad'ning; when the moon's pale beams
Stole through her lattice, they dispensed a gloom
As mournful as the shadows of her doom.
She fled from solitude, to find in crowds
The ghosts of Pleasure walking in their shrouds;
Then learned to smile—to mingle with the rest—
A self-invited, not unwelcome guest!
(For Misery, a cynic though she be,

Is proud of having thoughtful company.)
But that which makes a Siren or a saint,
Preserved her from contagion and the taint
Of vices, born of love, and mad despair,
That grinned in hideous forms around her there,
Where Prostitution as a Circe reigned;
And Passion, like a savage beast unchained
To prowl and hunt her prey at midnight hour,
Then bind the struggling victim in her power.
Unharmed she moved—as Dian chaste and cold,
She could not barter virtue's coin for gold.
But in her woman instincts more refined,
She kept that precious jewel of the mind.
Yet for a fallen sister's wo could feel—
Her heart was woman's, but it was not steel.
She might have been the first to cast the stone,
Judging in this their merit by her own,
But exercised forbearance seldom shown
In woman's sentence, when she tries the cause
Of the transgressor upon virtue's laws.
THEY doom the wretch to the black hell of shame,
But leave her conqueror an unsullied name.
While the self-righteous, woman Pharisee,
Prayed as a model saint of purity,
SHE said, "O God, be merciful to me!"

Feeling the guilt and weakness that had cast
Their shadows o'er the memories of the past.

Among these fallen ones it chanced she met
A wretched soul, entangled in the net
Which practiced treacherous, cunning does employ
To lure the helpless victim, and destroy.
'Twas evening twilight, and the chill winds blew
In fitful gusts the cold dark alley through,
Of that Athenian city, where resort
The faculty that practice in Love's court.
Here, in retirement, oft in common meet
The *savan*, and *plebeian* of the street.
For in the dark, love no distinction knows:
Poor Ellen boasts of her patrician beaux,
Who early come their fond regards to pay,
And when the hour is midnight, steal away,
To break th' unquiet slumbers of a spouse,
And by her side, a stupid mass to drowse,
Till Sol has mounted midway in the skies;
Then rubs the dews of slumber from the eyes.
Here wandering late she met—ah, could it be
The one she knew almost in infancy?
Pure, happy, and confiding as a lamb,
She had beheld her; when a blush of shame
Her cheek would crimson at the thought of wrong—

Her music artless as the linnet's song,
Fell with a gush of sweetness on the ear
In trilling notes, sweet, musical and clear.
But ah! how changed the Ellen that she saw,
Poor, frail transgressor upon virtue's law!
The modest hue of healthful, rosy red,
Once on her dimpled cheek so freshly spread,
Was imitated faintly, by the brush
With odious libels upon virtue's blush.
Faded and sunken were her eyes, but wore
Some faint expression that had charmed before:
Something that spoke a soul not wholly lost,
But on waves of Passion tempest-tossed.
How came she there—it were a tale too long
To write the history—a dark tale of wrong.
'Twas Love and Treachery that had wrought her fall
And she must drink the wormwood and the gall.
Who cares to hear that oft-repeated tale?
Beware vain woman, know thy sex is frail!
Boast not of virtue that has ne'er been tried—
'Twas flattery won the heart of Adam's bride;
And since, has flattery but too oft beguiled
Of fallen Eve, full many a simple child,
And driven from Love's sweet Paradise of rest
The hopeless mourner with an aching breast.

Then judge her not with sentence too severe,
Or grudge repentant misery a tear:
Thou may'st not know how oft a voice of prayer,
From the poor child of sorrow and despair
Goes up to God's high throne and makes a record there
—A fearful record in the court of Heaven
Against the sins by which that soul was driven
To tread, as by a fate inevitable,
Its downward journey to the gates of hell.
'Tis woman's weakness—more, her sin, her shame,
Not to revenge a fallen sister's shame,
And brand the wretch a villain, who beguiles
Young Innocence with love's deceitful smiles.

The tale poor Ellen told in the sad ear
Of Iphigene, brought to her eyes the tear,
And in her soul revengeful feelings bred:
Till then she deemed not there was one so dead
To every feeling of remorse and shame,
Humanity, or aught that bears the name,
As he, who by that means most base of all,
Deceitful love, had wrought poor Ellen's fall.
She felt almost to triumph in those arts,
She once had practiced on her lovers' hearts.
Why might not woman give as well as take?

Such stony hearts she knew could never break!
Who wrought this ruin had in years before
Knelt at her feet to tremble and adore—
Sued for that pity from her scornful pride;
Which to poor, simple Ellen was denied;
And had she yielded to his pleading then;
Like her, perchance, she had forsaken been:
And feeling thus, she felt her sin was light,
Perhaps unnoticed in her Maker's sight.
False-reasoning woman! had he not believed,
And been by thy deceiving smiles deceived,
He ne'er had deemed so light of woman's love;
Or proved a serpent to the harmless dove.

She spoke kind words to Ellen; but they came
Upon her soul like scorchings of a flame:
She felt, poor soul, she had no power to break
The chains that bound her. As the crested snake
By the strange fascination of his eye
Draws down the fluttering songster from the sky,
Till in his slimy coils securely bound,
He deals, and sheds a poison in the wound:
So Prostitution does her victims bind:
Her influence is the madness of the mind.
They see her in her hideous serpent shape,
But from her coiling folds may not escape.

They parted. Ellen to her Cyprian den,
Betook her, weary, homeless steps again;
And Iphigene to mix in Fashion's throng,
And list with a sad heart false Pleasure's siren song.

RETROSPECTION.

It is the lonely twilight hour,
 When from the distant hill,
Chanting her song in woodland bower,
 Is heard the whipporwill.
I wander sadly by the stream
 Down near yon elm-trees shade ;
Where year ago, of love to dream,
 A merry boy, I strayed.

Familiar scenes ! alas, thy bring
 From Memory's treasured store,
Pictures of Fancy's penceling,
 That charmed in days of yore ;
When Youth walked hand in hand with Joy,
 Adown the stream of Time ;
Happy as infant with its toy,
 Or poet in his rhyme.

Oh Life ! how strangeiy art thou wrought
 By Chance, or Fate, or Will,
In scenes with mystic changes fraught,
 That blend the Good and Ill.

On such a night I stood to gaze
Enraptured on the scene,
Where stars of twilight shed their rays,
With Love's star as a queen.

A radiant smile upon me shone,
With soul-entrancing power;
'Twas Venus with her charming zone—
Who Cythæra's quiver bore;
But poet's pen nor painter's brush
Could e'er expression find,
To show the sweetness of that blush,
Or graces of the mind.

Embowered in trees beside the stream,
A stately mansion stood—
A spot where Love himself might seem
To court a solitude.
Long years have passed—again I stand
Beside that antique dome,
Within whose stately halls so grand,
Love finds no more a home.

The bird that sings in yonder bower
Her sweetly mournful strain,
Recalls remembrance of an hour
That ne'er will come again;

And of the music of a strain,
Which still I seem to hear—
The echo of a lost refrain,
That once had charmed my ear.
The same I've heard in crowded halls,
Cheered by the listening throng—
The sweetest of the madrigals,
Where Love is born of Song.

But ah! there was a sadness there,
That mocked the minstrel's art;
It told of sorrow, toil, and care,
And of a breaking heart:
And as I read the history
Of one who sang the strain,
There was a tear-drop in my eye,
And memories in my brain
That called up from the shadowy past
The scenes on which I look;
That mansion silent and defaced,
The wood, the song, the brook.

'Tis twenty years ago, to-night,
We parted where I stand—
Oh Time! bear backward in your flight,
From Youth's, bright fairy land

The promise of that rapturous hour,
That thrilled my soul with joy:
Spare, spare me yet thou envious power,
These treasures of the boy.

I've wandered wide o'er earth to find
By haunt of classic shrine,
That wealth for which I here resigned
The love so truly mine.
Oh fame! a worthless prize thou art,
And wealth a pageant show;
When love is banished from the heart,
How dark is all below!

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